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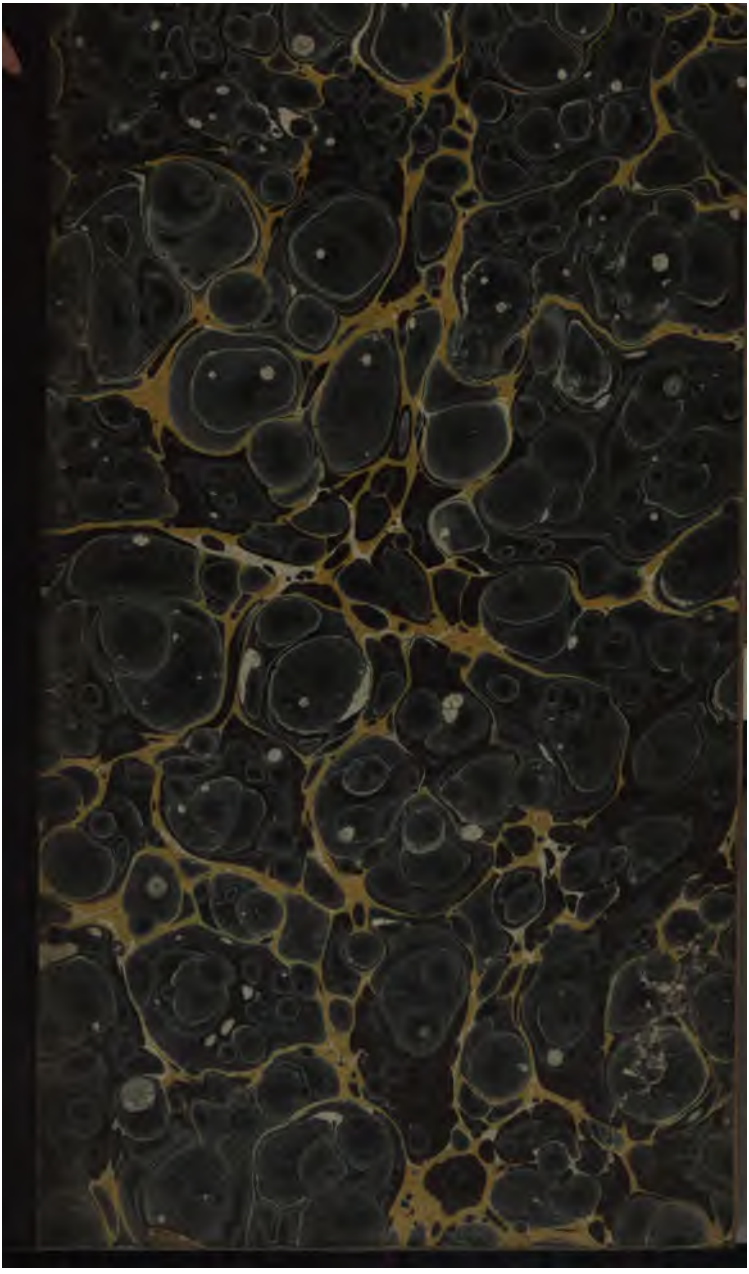

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MODERN ATHEISM.

MODERN ATHEISM;

OR, THE

PRETENSIONS OF SECULARISM EXAMINED.

A Course of Four Lectures,

DELIVERED IN

THE ATHENÆUM, THORNTON, BRADFORD.

BY THE

REV. J. GREGORY, OF THORNTON.
REV. G. W. CONDER, OF LEEDS.
REV. J. A. SAVAGE, OF WILSDEN.
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LONDON:
PARTRIDGE & OAKEY, PATERNOSTER ROW;
AND 70, EDGWARE ROAD.
BRADFORD: BYLES. HALIFAX: BIRTWHISTLE.
LEEDS: SLADE.

1853.

110. d. 11.

PARTRIDGE AND OAKEY, PRINTERS, PADDINGTON.

PREFACE.

THE history of this book is soon told. During the winter months of the last and present year a few sermons were preached by Mr. Gregory, minister of Kipping Chapel, Thornton, on infidelity. They were not a series, but came up occasionally in the ordinary ministrations of the Sabbath. A small knot of infidels in a neighbouring village felt themselves aggrieved by these public assaults on their system, and represented themselves as persecuted for opinion's sake, because all public places were closed against them, and no opportunity was afforded for the publication of their sentiments. They, at length, applied to Mr. Joseph Craven, a deacon of the church at Kipping, for the loan of the Athenæum. He permitted them to have it for the delivery of four lectures. This he did, after much thought and counsel, lest he might be the occasion of wounding many tender consciences which hold infidelity in utter abhorrence; though he felt confident that in an open encounter between truth and error, the

cause of Christianity would be triumphant. Forthwith, the whole neighbourhood was placarded with bills announcing four lectures on Secularism, by Mr. A. Robinson, and Mr. C. Shackleton; and that discussion would be allowed after the lectures. Mr. Mellor, of Halifax, conducted the first night's discussion; Mr. Fraser, classical professor of Airedale College, conducted the second and fourth night's discussion, and Mr. Savage, of Wilsden, the third night's. The present lectures were delivered in reply to the preceding ones. In the first instance it was proposed to deliver them without discussion, and then to print them; and as the debating had brought out the prominent topics of the controversy, it was thought useless to continue it further, because its continuance would only be a stale repetition of oft-mooted points. But our opponents so bitterly complained of unfairness, and so doggedly persisted in debating with us, that the discussion was re-opened, and every facility was afforded for demolishing our positions by argument. We have no reason to regret this, but to rejoice in it, as we think the closing, as well as the foregoing nights of debate, brought no loss along with them to our cause, but great gain. Our adversaries put out their best strength, but if we mistake not, the public will say that their strength had in it much of logical and moral weakness.

In every discussion the boldest, but shallowest sophistries were exposed, and many important scrip-

tural positions were impregnably maintained. To our brethren who have so ably helped us, both in discussion, and in the delivery of lectures, the committee feel themselves under great obligations. To Professor Fraser the cause of Christianity is indebted for his manly management of the principal part of the discussion. He evinced great aptitude in meeting the adversaries of truth; and it is to be regretted that in a debate possessing so high moral intellectual power, it cannot be given to the public, as no arrangements for doing so had been made.

Kipping Parsonage,
April 13, 1853.

LECTURE I.

"CHRISTIANITY WEIGHED IN THE BALANCE."

We would not willingly put our sickle into another man's corn. We should never think of meddling with men's opinions, if men's opinions were not hurtful to soul and to body. Error is best met by truth, and truth only can turn wrong thoughts into right ones. Necessity seems laid upon us to enter upon the present controversy. We contend, and we would not contend otherwise than earnestly, for the faith once delivered to the saints. We propose to attack the most prominent and salient points of our opponents, on Christianity weighed in the balance. We shall quote accurately from the report of the lecture, and speak our mind without reserve, eschewing as far as may be, needless personalities. We shall gather up the thoughts which were thrown out in the first lecture, into sections under the following headings.

The many Religions—Reason without Revelation—

This World, the real World—Man made Intelligent—The Existence of God—Man's Responsibility—The Fall of Man—The Atonement of Christ—Concluding Observations.

THE MANY RELIGIONS.

"There is perhaps nothing which strikes even a careless observer of society with greater force, than the various religious systems which distract the mind of man the world over, and the various creeds and the various opinions, which arise out of these multitudinous systems—each believing his own system to be right—each believing his own system to be true. There is nothing which strikes us more forcibly, than to see how many religious opinions there are in the world, and yet all rallying round their respective standards—enthusiastic apologists—fiery combatants—conscientious believers—devoted adherents. The Mohammedan stands boldly forth, and tells you that his Koran is the true Gospel—that his prophet is the true prophet. He pronounces the opprobious epithet of "infidel," against all who dare to doubt the truthfulness of his religion, and believes Christians universally to be wrong. The poor Hindoo that bows to the image of his hands, shrinks with infinite terror at the sight of a religious intruder that dares to profane the sanctuary of his idolatry. He is really sincere with the Mohammedan and the Christian. And see how ardent, how enthusiastic, how anxious Christians are in promoting their own cause; how they pity the ignorance of the poor Hindoo—never for a mo-

ment suspecting or imagining that their system is as replete with monstrosities, absurdities and contradictions even as that of the poor negro. Never for a moment does the Christian suspect the truthfulness of his own opinion. All, all the wide world over, are animated by one common feeling, viz., the propagation of what they conceive to be true. Since then, there are so many opinions—since then, there are so many religions in the world, it behoves us to be careful how we condemn the opinions—the faith —the religion of others. If one is wrong, why not another? If one is mistaken in his religion, why not another? All believing that we have the truth, let us at least treat each other as sincere, though we may believe each other to be mistaken. Truth is one, our opinions are many; and since our opinions are many, and truth one, some of us, nay, the great mass of us are in the wrong. It behoves us therefore to examine minutely and carefully, who are and who are not in the right."

There is in these statements a liberalism which at first sight is very plausible, and with many very popular. We deem it, however, a spurious liberalism, a sort of limitless latitudinarianism incompatible with a high, social, moral condition of any people. That system, be it religious, social or scientific, which has in it the largest amount of truth (making reason the judge), has the largest claim to universal acceptance. Christianity has set up a higher standard of morality than any other religion, it has more perfect individual developments than any other, it has been subjected to the trial of more acute logical

reasoning than any other. False forms of religion have in them a portion of truth, and without which they could not stand. The truth is to the falsehood what the pole is to certain plants which climb up and twine round it. Take away the pole, and you destroy the plant. If Christianity, judging of it from its internal evidences, and from its practical results, is as replete with monstrosities, absurdities and contradictions, as Hindooism or Mohammedanism, it may be justly classed with them, but if otherwise, it is unjust thus to class it; as unjust as putting the Ptolemaic, the Copernican and the Newtonian systems of the earth on the same footing, or, as affirming that alchemy with all its vagaries, and chemistry with all its verities, have equal claims to belief.

Much stress is laid on sincerity, and we are exhorted to "treat each other as sincere, though we may believe each other to be mistaken." Sincerity may be reached by wrong means, and we may be sincere in a bad, as well as in a good cause. Many Jesuits and slave-holders are sincere, but their sincerity does not and ought not, to lessen our hatred of Jesuitism and slavery. Sincerity is no proof of the righteousness of any cause. It makes us more propitious to its possessor, but not a whit more to his principles. *Sincerity* is a very convenient plea for any that may be vagrant as the gipsy, or many coloured as the camelion, in a professed pursuit of truth.

The statements we are combating, go to cast discredit on the truth of religion, because of the diver-

sified forms of religion. This may be a very favourite, but we think a very fallacious argument. What department of truth is there, where diversity of opinion does not prevail? Geology is a magnificent science, but it is associated with baseless theories, and with the wildest speculations. Passing by the eastern cosmogony of the Greeks, Egyptians, Arabians and Hindoos, many schemes in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were gravely propounded, and readily adopted which are now exploded. Burnet tells us that the earth in the first instance consisted of a thin light crust covering a great abyss, but which was broken up at the deluge, and the fragments thereof now form our mountains. Leibnitz and Descartes inform us that the earth was an extinguished sun, a vitrified globe; and that our present mountains are the vitrifications of ancient burnings, and that sand is pulverised rock, produced by motion. Kepler affirmed that the earth had vital faculties, that a fluid circulates through it, as in the human body, and that a process of assimilation goes on as perfect as in the human frame. These "monstrosities, absurdities and contradictions," do not disturb or alter the great principles of geology. Astronomy is the most exact and finished of all the sciences, and the system is untouched by past exploded theories, and the wild extravagant guesses of astrology. Politics have had all kinds of advocates good and bad, subtle theorisers, bold adventurers; and the most varying impracticable political systems have been palmed upon mankind involving "monstrosities, absurdities and contradictions," but not-

withstanding all these, no one denies, that there is such a thing as political science. Mathematics are a system of demonstrations. But mathematicians have on certain points, widely differed from each other. The ablest geometers have been perplexed for 2000 years respecting the theory of parallel lines. Much controversy has existed as to the proper mode of treating proportion. On the doctrine of vanishing fractions, Waring, Maseres, Hutton and Woodhouse, are opposed to each other. The nature and application of imaginary or possible quantities have been much disputed; and Euler and Emerson have widely disagreed. But does this diversity of opinion affect the science of mathematics? On the same principle, some men believe in Buddhism, others in Hindooism, and others in Mahommedanism; but does this variety of belief affect the great scheme of Christianity?

REASON WITHOUT REVELATION.

It is asked, "Of whom shall we seek assistance in the solving of this great problem, which has agitated the Christian world for eighteen hundred years, and which is likely to agitate it for eighteen hundred years to come? To whom shall we apply for assistance? Have we any other resource but our own reason? If we cannot even judge of what is, and what is not true, without the exercise of our reason, let us for once in our lives examine the standard of our faith by that reason, and not cripple our reason by that standard."

Shall we say, according to this statement, that Pascal, and Boyle, and Newton, and Locke, and Milton were men of crippled reason, because they were men who bowed to the standard of Christianity? or is the great bulk of those who receive the standard, more crippled in reason than those who reject it, and trample it under foot? They who say "yes," may find it easier to assert, than to prove such an assertion. Christianity demands the exercise of the severest reason. Without reason we ought not to receive the Bible as a standard, but carefully to weigh the evidences of its truth—without reason we cannot interpret the Bible aright, nor does its Author intend we should—without reason we cannot distinguish between right and wrong. There are doctrines in the Bible which wit and reason cannot comprehend, but when the incomprehensible comes before us, being fully satisfied with the divinity of the Bible, we cannot consistently bend the doctrines to our reason, but rather bow our reason to the doctrines. In the paragraph just quoted, Reason is regarded as our sole guide, and spoken of as if it were an infallible standard of action. Could there be a greater mistake than this? Does not all history, and our every day's experience prove the fallibility of reason? Has not reason, at one time, said this thing and that thing were quite *impossible*, but in a short time, the *impossible* was shown to be the *possible*, and we see this in common, world-wide facts. The prodigies of our railways, the magic working of the telegraph, and its prospective girdling of our globe, are cases in point. On the other

hand, what reason once said was *possible*, time has shown to be *impossible*. The alchemist proposed to turn all substances into gold, but this crotchet has long been ejected from the region of reason; and Californian and Australian mines of gold have made all transmuting processes of alchemy unnecessary. In science, of which infidelity boasts so much, *reason* has had some strange freaks. Many infidel philosophers affirm that there is nothing but matter —there can be nothing but matter—there is no such thing as mind. And what we call mental efforts are but results of organization. Berkeley and his disciples maintained with a show of irresistible reasoning that there was no such thing as matter, and argued against the possibility of an external world. "There is nothing," say these philosophers, "there can be nothing in the universe but mind, or even if there were, it could never become known to us. If philosophers who cultivate and almost worship reason, teach such opposite results in science, no one can fairly say that reason is our sole and infallible guide. If one should rise up and oracularly reply, it is *ignorance* that reaches wrong results, it is *reason* that reaches right results. Stay a little. The respective theories of Burnet, Kepler, Leibnitz and Berkeley are shewn to be perfectly baseless, but they were the dictates of reason. Their authors gave a reason for what they said, and believed what they said; and therefore their theories were not the guesses of ignorance, but the deductions of reasoning. The facts of history make manifest how little reason can be trusted as our sole guide. Greece has an im-

perishable history. It was once the land of architecture, sculpture, poetry and philosophy—the land of Socrates, Plato, Aristotle and Homer, whose works will never die—the land to which we now turn for models of poetic beauty and philosophic power—the land where reason lifted its inhabitants to the loftiest heights of social refinement. Behind this bright picture, there is another, dark, dismally dark. What is the morality of Greece? It has in it idolatry, slavery, homicide and barbarous cruelty. In Athens, such was the rage for gods, that the remark was made, that it was "more easy to find a god than a man;" yea, such the rage for idol gods, that at last, when their most expressive language was exhausted, and they could find no more names for invented deities, they raised an altar, τῷ αγνωστῷ θεῷ, the undescribed god. Many of the gods, both of the Romans and the Greeks, were the greatest monsters that ever walked the earth. Mercury was a thief; and because he was an expert thief, he was enrolled among the gods. Bacchus was a mere sensualist and drunkard, and therefore he was enrolled among the gods. Venus was a dissipated and abandoned courtezan, and therefore she was enrolled among the goddesses. Mars was a savage, that gloried in battle and in blood; and therefore he was deified and enrolled among the the gods. In short, there is not one lust that nestles in the human heart, nor one vice which deforms and depraves human conduct, which was not positively deified, and which did not more or less characterize one of the gods in the Roman Pantheon.

What is China at this day, where *reason* has had a fair field and full play? The Chinese have long been distinguished in some departments of science; to them belong the discovery of the Mariner's compass, and gunpowder. The perfection to which they have carried many of the arts the Great Exhibition fully attested; they have long been a book-making and a book-reading people, the poorest among them often rise to official distinctions, and to court favor, by the amount of Chinese learning; many valuable moral maxims of Confucius, have long and freely circulated in the empire; but China, in every point of view, is far below England and America. It is a pure despotism. Appalling cruelties prevail. Its idolatries are indescribable. There are nearly 2,000 temples dedicated to Confucius, and innumerable costly sacrifices annually presented to him. They have gods in almost every house and every grove, and Gutzlaff, the American traveller states, that he saw upon sign boards in China, "gods made and repaired in this house." There woman is a most degraded and miserable being. The destruction of infants is a common thing. Pekin and Canton make daily revelations of deeds at which the heart shudders.

The Hindoos are a civilized, polished and highly reasoning people. They have an ancient and a learned literature. They are advanced in many of the arts of life. They have systems of mental philosophy, acute and somewhat profound. They are accomplished in mathematical science, and are supposed to be the first discoverers of the highest branch of it—the differential calculus. They possess a large por-

tion of our English literature, "our Shakspere, our Milton, our Addison and our Johnson, are all translated into Hindostanee, and even Hume's infidel Essays; and all these they read with great interest and admiration." Reason has distinguished the Hindoos from the Africans and South Sea islanders, but has it made them virtuous, and lifted them up from the depths of their moral degradation? Their superstitions and cruelties are notorious. They have nearly as many millions of gods as there are days in the year. Female infanticide is fearful throughout all India; and before British government interposed, in Bengal alone, fifteen thousand widows were computed to have been burnt annually, because their husbands had died. Indian Thugism is an organized system of murder. It is not only followed as a trade, but is actually made a part and parcel of daily worship, a matter of merit and of virtue. No one can describe fully the horrors of Indian idolatry.

France affords illustration that reason is a baffled thing in relation to a nation's morality. It has had all means and appliances at its command, for working out a great result upon a great people. It has been successful, up to a certain point of national greatness, but it has shown its perfect impotency to reach the point of true greatness. *Reason* has made the French a polite people, a fashionable people (for all England has heard of French fashions), a scientific people, a philosophic people, a truly eloquent people, a highly artistic people, so that in some departments, they bore away the palm in our Great Exhibition. But here we must stop, in our

eulogy. What is France socially, politically, morally? She has long been crushed beneath popery, —a perverted form of Christianity—baptized paganism and a rank, wide spread atheism. However much she has had of the former, she has had equally as much of the latter. Between absolute infidelity and absolute popery, no stand point, no *media via*, appears. If popery has naturally vanquished infidelity, infidelity has more than once vanquished popery. The writings of Voltaire, Diderot, Rousseau, and of the English infidels, Herbert, Hobbes, Paine, Bolingbroke and Hume, no less than a proud extravagant court backed by an insolent and wicked priesthood, prepared the French people for that fearful drama in European history, the French Revolution of 1793. Then the ordinances of religion were abolished, the decade was substituted for the Sabbath, the "*National Convention*" decreed that the creed of France was "*no God;*" they stood upon the graves of martyrs, and wrote, "Death an eternal Sleep;" the Bible was publicly burnt by the hangman; *Reason* was enthroned in the place of God; a harlot, the personification of Reason, was charioted through the streets of Paris, and placed on the chief altar of France, and worshipped as the goddess of *Reason*. It may be said, that kingcraft and priestcraft had a large share in ripening the French Revolution. The wedge which these had inserted, was driven to the head by the strokes of a desperate infidelity. Popery and infidelity may seem at perfect antagonism, but nothing is further from fact. Infidelity in France, has always been largely the offspring of popery, and eye-witnesses

tell us, there never was a greater amount of infidelity, than at present, both covert and avowed. Where popery is outwardly professed, there is beneath this papal sham and show, lurking a wide spread, deep seated, fearless infidelity. What is France's condition? What can Englishmen think of France? She cannot bear a government, and yet she cannot overthrow government; she cannot bear long a monarchy nor yet republicanism; she cannot bear universal suffrage nor a restricted suffrage; she cannot bear an aristocracy nor yet democracy; she cannot bear liberty nor a despotism; and yet she has a despotism as perfect as any usurper can make it. Physical force, military rule, is the iron hoof by which France is now down-trodden. Thus we have shown, that man's *reason*, abjuring heaven's revelation, is no safe guide, either for man or for nations.

THIS WORLD, THE REAL WORLD.

Another paragraph we examine, is: "But we are told by some of our friends that it is best to be on the safe side. I was reading in a tract a few days ago about having two strings to one bow. The Christian tells you that if his system is false, he loses nothing by it, but that if, on the contrary, ours is false, we lose everything. Now this argument may appear good, but it is fallacious. Is it nothing to spend your time in building chapels? Is it nothing to spend your time in studying that which is of no use? If Christianity be false, is it nothing that you spend twenty millions per annum in its propaga-

tion? If Christianity be false, is it nothing that you are troubled with a thousand anxieties and cares about what shall become of you after death. If Christianity is false, is it nothing that day after day you have the fear of death before your eyes? If Christianity is false, it makes you slaves while you live, and cowards in death."

Two or three points demand attention. Christianity makes no slaves in life, and no cowards in death. This may be fathered on a perverted or an unintelligent Christianity, but not on the Christianity of the New Testament. Its language is that of joyous confidence, calling upon us to rejoice in hope, to be patient in tribulation, to rejoice ever more. Not one case can be found of the apostles and early disciples betraying anything like fear in the prospect of death and judgment. They met imprisonment, bonds and martyrdom with a sublime moral heroism, and counted it all joy that they were permitted to seal the truth with their blood. Whoever heard of a Christian in our day or in any other day, in life's last hour, giving up his Christianity, and laying hold of infidelity? But have we not proof upon proof that infidelity has shown itself a cowardly thing in the face of death? Daily pastoral observation can supply many proofs of this. But let well known facts speak. Voltaire, in his last illness, sent for Dr. Trochin, who, when he came, found him in the greatest agonies, exclaiming, "I am abandoned by God and man." In his life he applied the epithet, "The Wretch," and the motto appended to his writings was, "Crush the Wretch;" but in the prospect

of death he said, "O, doctor, I will give you half of what I am worth, if you will give me six month's life." The doctor answered, "Sir, you cannot live six weeks." Voltaire replied, "Then I shall go to hell." We may read the account of his death by Abbé Baruel: "In his last illness he sent for Diderot, D'Alembert and others of his infidel companions, but they witnessed only their shame; often he would curse these men, and say, 'retire, it is you that have brought me to my present state; I could have done without you all, but you could not exist without me.' They could hear him the prey of anguish and dread, alternately supplicating and blaspheming God; and in plaintive tones he would cry out, 'O, Jesus Christ,' and complain that he was abandoned by God and man." This prince of modern infidels, this bold blasphemer of God, sent for a Roman Catholic priest, the Abbé Gualtier, to give him the sacrament! Dr. Trochin said that the furies of Orestes could give but a faint idea of the state and conscience of Voltaire." Mirabeau died calling out, "Give me more laudanum, that I may not think of eternity and of what is to come." And Hobbes said in his last hours, "I am now about to take a leap in the dark." These were the chiefs of infidelity, and their cowardice in death cannot be honestly denied. A large number of examples of equal cowardice in men of less note might be cited, did the case demand it. It is infidelity that "makes men slaves while they live, and cowards in death."

Another point, as to "spending our time in building chapels, and studying that which is of no use,"

we observe, if we are sincere in our belief of Christianity, we ought to grudge no time, and no money, that we may spend in its diffusion. It is our duty to act out our convictions, and earnestly and honestly to spread our principles. The waste of time and money, on which our opponents lay so much stress, and which they seek to parade with popular effect, is a fallacious argument. There is nothing so expensive as vice, and there is nothing so cheap as virtue. It is said to us you have so much to pay to parsons, so much for building chapels, so much to missionary, bible, and tract societies, you require always to have your hand in your pocket, and to give of your hard earnings to this, and that religious object. Why, a worldly man will often spend more in some excursion of pleasure, or on some favorite game, "more in a single evening in giving a ball and supper, or treating a party to the opera, than many a religious man of the same rank is required to pay for his religion in a year. Depend upon it the truth in more senses than one is, that there is nothing so expensive as sin, nothing so exhausting as pleasure. The man who is a slave of neither, may have other expenses, but all things else being equal, he will generally be best prepared for making a deposit, getting credit or security, or taking a step onward from his present position." Christianity is an excellent friend for this life, and also for the life to come, it teaches us how "possible" it is "to make the best of both worlds."

Our opponents tell us that we "have missed the first opportunity, the first world, the real world."

"You have spent your time in preparing for imaginary worlds, instead of endeavouring to render this happy and comfortable." "You destroy the very foundation on which morality should rest," by so doing. How Christianity destroys the foundation of morality, while it inculcates the highest morality, and exhibits a purer morality in its outward manifestations than any other system, is somewhat difficult to see. If Christianity were a vicious thing, it would make men vicious, but it makes vicious men virtuous; and the Bible, denounced as the most immoral book in the world, produces the highest order of morality; it has made thousands upon thousands examples of morality, and no countries without the Bible can be compared in point of morality to those which have it and love it. These are facts, but facts in opposition to the reasonings of our adversaries. This world is as real to the Christian as it is to the infidel. He gets as much real life out of it, if not more, as any other men. He is as keenly alive to its beauties, as apt to enjoy its blessings, and as intent upon its business, as the rest of mankind. His Christianity enjoins him to "use the world, and not to abuse it." The benevolent institutions of the land, the societies for ameliorating the miseries of our fellow-men, are principally in the hands of religious men; and there is no great social and moral movement in which religious men have not a large share. It is said, "let us employ our time in raising the downcast, in elevating the poor and down-trodden." We ask, who has done more in this God-like work than Christians? It was Clarkson, for a long time un-

known to fame, who, with untiring energy, wrote and travelled and worked for the emancipation of the slave; it was Wilberforce, with a child-like spirit, and with a bland and beautiful genius, who stood up in his place in the House of Commons year after year, and pleaded, earnestly and eloquently, the cause of the slave; it was Fowel Buxton, a most manly man, that followed in the wake of Clarkson and Wilberforce, that was finally instrumental in breaking the chain, and casting away the yoke of slavery; it was Howard, whose name has become a household word for universal philanthropy, who looked into all the depths of prison misery, and effected a wonderful reformation in prison discipline. But all these were, in the highest sense, Christian men, influenced by Christian motive, and seeking to work out a Christian end. "Uncle Tom's Cabin," is a book of world-wide fame, equally fascinating to Englishmen as to Americans, the spell of the Spaniard, the Frenchman, the Austrian and Russian; by its facts, adorned with all the charms of fiction, put with dramatic power, it has rung the knell and dug the grave of slavery. But every part of it is pervaded with gospel truth, written by a highly Christian female, the wife of an American Independent minister.

A national fact or two, as to the making the best of this world by religious men, may be stated.

Scotland has long been the land of pure Protestant principles, and of strong religious feeling; and this feeling underlying the Scotchman's character, it gives him untiring industry, indomitable energy, and success

and distinction in every part of the world. Ireland lacks that which Scotland has; and instead of being blessed with a living, practical Christianity, it has been cursed with the shams and shows of Christianity—with the gew gaws of the Roman religion. The effect is, that the Irishman is familiar with squalid poverty—family wretchedness—famine in all its frightful forms; and the Irish are among the lowest grades of our English population. We deprecate, as much as our opponents, England's conduct, in many respects, to Ireland. We have no faith in sending public benefactions, in the shape of millions of money, to help out the poverty of Ireland. We protest against a national, richly endowed Protestant church in the midst of a papal people. But who are sapping the foundations of the Roman Catholic faith —elevating socially the Irish people—turning the wilderness into a fruitful field, by establishing model schools, by purchasing farms for the employment of the poor, by manufacturing goods for the English market? Who is doing this? Principally the Protestant Christian Presbyterians of Ireland. Thousands have been given in this neighbourhood by religious men, for this great enterprise. Let secularists read Dr. Dill's book on this movement, and his own and his fellows' doings in Ireland, and then let them go and do likewise, and we will believe that they are the benefactors of our country.

MAN MADE INTELLIGENT.

The lecturer observed: "You are told about man being an intelligent being by nature; you are told of

his being endowed with mind. I tell you—and I risk all upon this—I rest my whole argument upon this point—man does not come into the world an intelligent being; he comes into the world endowed with susceptibility, and that susceptibility is capable of being made intelligent." To this statement we can subscribe. It needs not to be pompously paraded before us as if it were some discovery in mental science. But we are told, "that intelligence is nothing more than an accumulation of sensations. He accumulates these sensations through the medium of his senses. All that he knows, all that he can know, and all that he ever did know, and all that he ever will know, he has gained through the medium of his feeling, seeing, smelling, and tasting. I say he has no other means of getting any information whatever—no other means of knowing anything except through the medium of his sensation." Here truth and error are clumsily mingled together; and here is a sad confusion in writing, arising from confusion in thinking. First, intelligence is nothing but an accumulation of sensations, then man accumulates these sensations through the medium of his senses. Here intelligence is made to consist of sensations, and these sensations are the medium of sensations, they are the thing, and also the medium of the thing, at the same time; and sensations, and the medium of the senses are regarded as two things, whereas they are but one and the same thing. We are told also that man has "no other means of knowing anything, except through the medium of sensation." While we admit, and mental philosophy fully admits it,

that it is by means of sensations that we become conscious of the outer world, and through the sensational medium our native susceptibility of thinking is awakened and developed. But this being done, man has power to reflect; to analyze, to compare and to combine. The sensational, the emotional, the intellectual parts of our nature, are needful for an intelligent man. Were one of these wanting, man could never be distinguished for knowledge and mental development.

In this controversy we have been charged with holding the doctrines of "Innate Ideas," and a crude materialistic philosophy has been paraded before the people with dogmatic tone by our opponents: so that it is necessary for us briefly to state our views on this point. We have not innate ideas, but innate susceptibilities—not innate sentiments, but innate capacities, *i. e.*, the mind possesses the laws of thought and feeling, but these laws depend for their development on the external world, through the medium of the senses. "These faculties and susceptibilities are, no doubt, congenital to the mind, or rather, are the mind itself. But its actually manifested phenomena wait the touch of the external, and they will be modified accordingly. Everything in the process of the mind's development goes to show that whatever its capacities, tendencies, faculties, "potentialities" (call them what you will), a certain external influence is necessary to awaken its dormant life, to turn a "potentiality" into an energy; to transform a dim *inkling* of a truth into an intelligent, vital, conscious recognition of it. Nor is this

law confined to mind alone; all nature attests its presence. All effects are the result of properties or susceptibilities in one thing, solicited by external contact with those of others. The fire no doubt may smoulder in the dull and languid embers; it is when the external breeze sweeps over them, that they begin to sparkle and glow, and vindicate the vital element they contain. The diamond in the mine has the same internal properties in the darkness as in the light; it is not till the sun shines upon it, that it flashes on the eye its splendour. Look at the flower of any particular species; we see that as it is developed in connection with a variety of external influences—as it comes successively under the action of the sun, rain, dew, soil, it expands in a particular manner, and in that only. It exhibits a certain configuration of parts, a certain form of leaf, a certain colour, fragrance, and no other. We do not doubt, on the one hand, that without "skiey influences" these things would never have been; nor, on the other, that the flower assumes this form of development, and this alone, in virtue of its internal structure and organization. But both sets of conditions must conspire in the results."* These remarks suppose that as much depends on the constitution of the mind, for the mind's true development, as upon the circumstances by which it is developed; and more than this, that when the mind has received anything like a matured development, it can wonderfully mould and shape circumstances. According to an enlightened philosophy, man's character is not made *for* him, but *by*

* Eclipse of Faith.

him. The most favourable circumstances will frequently produce nothing but dullness and stupidity; and apparently the most unfavourable ones will rear a man of mental energy and forcefulness of action. Many men live all their lives long amidst machine *working;* but never like Watt and Arkwright show any inventiveness in machine *making.* A youth might stand every day for years before the monuments of Nelson and Wellington, but without a strong will and long perseverance, he would never become anything like a Nelson or a Wellington.

If this is true of our mental nature, it is equally so of our moral. If man had not a native religious susceptibility, no religious circumstances would ever make him religious. Religion is constitutional—a part and parcel of his nature. It is not, as Lucretius said, a disease of the soul, but a necessity of the soul. There is something *within* us, to correspond with something *without* us. The objective reality would have no power over us without the subjective susceptibility. To say there would have been no religion if men had not been taught it; or, that there would have been no religious sentiments in the world, if there had been no religious priests in the world, is an upside-down logic, contrary both to facts and philosophy. It is not the priest that has produced the religion, but a universal natural religion that has produced a universal priesthood. The religion of all nations—their temples and altars—their rites and sacrifices, are but the outward developments of the deep, inward, religious yearnings of all nations—the visible tokens of man's belief

in the existence of, and constant dependance upon, some invisible superior being. Get quit of all the natural religion in the world, and we can get quit of all the priests in the world. But while religion is the deeply imbedded principle of our nature, the systematic public teaching of religion will always be in demand and in repute. And all attempts to displace such teaching, is as vain as attempting to move the Andes with a shoulder, or to stay the rolling tide with a rush or a rod.

THE EXISTENCE OF GOD.

It is said: "Christianity rests on certain data or certain axioms, like all other systems. Of these axioms, some, I venture to say, are assumed." We reply, are not all axioms assumed? An axiom does not admit of explanation, it is an ultimate principle, beyond which the human mind cannot go. It is further said: "I know no religion, you cannot produce to me a religion, that ever attempts to prove the existence of a God. It begins here, it borrows, or rather begs the data, and then proceeds to relate what God has done." If by this the lecturer meant, that no religion had ever made visible that which is invisible; or demonstrated the Divine existence, as men do physical facts, by experiments, in physical science; or proved it just as the mathematician solves his problem; then we admit the force of the objection. But if it is intended (and the language expresses this much), that no attempts have been made to adduce moral evidence (which is mainly

the evidence that can be adduced in this case), of the existence of God, then we deny the truth of the statement.

Have Butler, Clark, Lardner, Paley and Chalmers done nothing to establish the doctrine of the Divine existence? Their works on the being of a God are unanswered, and we think unanswerable by legitimate reasoning. They clearly show that the belief of a First Cause is the belief of a great mystery, but that the denying of a First Cause is a plunging into "absurdities, monstrosities and contradictions." The lecturer who has made such startling assertions as those referred to, should have elaborately shown us the lameness of our logic and the indefensibleness of our position, in relation to the Divine existence.

Paine says, in his "Age of Reason," the only idea man can affix to the name of God, is that of a First Cause, the cause of all things. And incomprehensible and difficult as it is for a man to conceive what a First Cause is, he arrives at the belief of it from the tenfold greater difficulty of disbelieving it. It is difficult beyond description to conceive that space can have no end; but it is more difficult to conceive an end. It is difficult beyond the power of man to conceive an eternal duration of what we call time; but it is more impossible to conceive a time when there shall be no time. In like manner of reasoning, everything we behold carries in itself internal evidence that it did not make itself. Every man is an evidence to himself that he did not make himself; neither could his father make himself, nor

his grandfather nor any of his race; neither could any tree, plant or animal make itself; and it is the conviction arising from this evidence that carries us on, as it were, by necessity, to the belief of a first cause eternally existing, of a nature totally different to any material existence we know of, and by the power of which all things exist, and this first cause man calls God." Such is Paine's testimony; and could any argument for the Divine existence be more clear and cogent? He has been glorified in this room, as a political chief, as an American patriot, as a great philanthropist, as a glorious republican (but he was certainly not a red republican with Danton, Marat, Robespierre); but as his deism ill assorts with modern atheism, it is unceremoniously cast overboard, and Paine is made an oracular witness in politics and patriotism, but a lying witness on the being of a God.

We shall state, as briefly as we can, a few reasons for our belief in the Divine existence. Something now exists, something has always existed, or else something has sprung from nothing, a supposition which is absurd, for that would be to have an effect without a cause. Something cannot come from nothing, any more than nothing can come from something. It is perfectly natural for us to go from effect to cause, and for every effect to seek out its cause. We admit that a cause may be an effect, as truly as it is the cause of an effect. In this sort of reasoning, the mind cannot but proceed till it reaches a first cause, adequate to the production of all second causes, and there any intelligent mind,

not morally perverted, reposes, as truly as it does on a secondary cause producing a secondary effect. Our opponents may reply, if any cause must have a cause, why may not the first cause have a cause. We say, the first cause is not an effect, and therefore cannot have a cause. How then are we to account for what does exist? Either we have an underived, self-existent, eternal, intelligent cause, giving existence to all other things and beings, or, that matter is eternal, and that there has been a ceaseless succession of men, plants and animals. The truth of the former proposition, and the absurdity of the latter, we shall try to establish.

According to this eternal succession scheme, each series of human beings, plants and animals, is self-existent and necessary, for it is uncaused. If the series is self-existent and necessary, then every individual in the series is self-existent and necessary. But every individual has a caused existence; one man produces another man, one tree produces another tree, one animal produces another animal. Each individual in the series is dependant upon another individual; but what is the whole series dependant upon? If each individual in the series, is caused and dependant, how can the whole series be uncaused and independant? The properties of the parts are the properties of the whole. The whole cannot have properties which the parts have not, because the whole is but an aggregation of the parts. No number of dependant beings can make an independant whole. According to the scheme in question, each individual is at the same time, dependant and

independant—self-existent and produced—necessary and contingent, which is absurd.

Again, that cannot be infinite which has parts. To suppose *that* infinite space which is composed of parts, would be to suppose it finite and infinite at the same time, because every part must have form and limit; and form and limit are incompatible with infinity. That cannot be infinite in duration which is made up of parts, since every part must have a commencing and terminating point. If every part has had a beginning, and there is no part which has not had a beginning, yet to say, that while every part has had a beginning, the whole composed of parts, has had no beginning, is to say absurdity.

Again, if there is a possibility of God's existence, which our opponents have repeatedly admitted, then the converse of this cannot be maintained, viz., the impossibility of His existence. Either it must be affirmed that His existence is possible, or, it is impossible. To say that such existence may or may not be, are contradictory propositions; and to hold them at the same time, is to hold an absurdity. The possibility destroys the impossibility, or the impossibility the possibility of the Divine existence. Yet in this controversy long but feeble reasonings have been adopted to demonstrate the non-existence of God, but when pressed by acute counter reasonings it has been said, as a sort of desperate resort—there may be a God. This has been done without perceiving the contradiction and absurdity of reasoning for the non-existence of God, being saddled with the ad-

mission that there may be a God. The man who has committed himself to the may-be proposition, has utterly disqualified himself for reasoning rationally, on the converse proposition—there cannot be a God. Any one making pretensions to accurate and consistent thinking, must say absolutely, either there is a God, or there is no God. We venture to maintain that between these two alternatives there is no middle ground on which a sound reasoner will try to stand.

"The universe," says Mirabeau, in his "System of Nature," "is an immense chain of causes and effects, which flow without ceasing, one from the other."* But how can this chain exist without a first link, and if all the links in the chain hang upon each other, on what does the first link hang? What hook is there for this? If all other links hang upon something, but the first link hangs upon nothing, then the first link has a property which the other links have not, and thus the chain is dependant, and independant at the same time. If it should be replied there is no first link, but all links are connected with each other; this does not relieve the difficulty a whit. Every link hangs upon something, but the whole chain, hangs on nothing—the whole is independant, while all the parts are dependant, which is absurd.

Further, the geological argument we cannot overlook, because it is conclusive for the Divine existence, and the Divine interposition to produce the present state of our world, though not equally so for the non-

* Vol. i., p. 89.

eternity of matter. Our opponents ought to welcome this argument, inasmuch as they regard "science as the providence of man." Geology clearly shows that the primary state of our globe, produced by the action of fire, was one, in which no life, either vegetable or animal could live, and no remains of life can be found—it was a molten mass of matter. Then follow the transition, the secondary, the tertiary strata—distinct states, not gradual developments of one state from another. In each of these departments, especially in the latter two, are found races of animals and vegetables perfectly distinct from each other, but no remains of man can be found. A clear proof, that man, and the present race of animals have been created; and have been but comparatively recent residents of our globe. Man's remains are only found in the crust of the earth—in the surface alluvial deposits. In the six miles strata below these not a remnant of man can be found. Look, atheists, at this great fact. It smites to the ground the gradual development doctrine, which an infidel philosophy, and the book of "Vestiges of Creation," have greedily clutched at, because the races are so distinct from each other. The argument from design, geology endows with new vitality and freshness, because all the discoveries in the earth's stratifications, reveal the principle of adaptation. The animal organisms are exactly suited to the different conditions of strata. The distinction of races in the secondary strata, and the reproduction of them in the tertiary strata, totally different in genus and species, cannot be accounted for, on the ordinary law of development;

miraculous interposition only can account for these mighty changes. Let atheism grapple with this geological evidence for God's existence. It may be said, the Bible favors no such views as geology takes. Yes! the first sentence in Genesis: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth," refers to God bringing matter out of nothing; the subsequent portions of the chapter refer to His moulding agency, in preparing it a residence for man and beast. In some ancient copies of the Hebrew Scriptures, the first sentence is separated from the rest of the chapter, showing that they are not necessarily connected.

The following thoughts may be regarded somewhat in the light of axioms, in relation to the Divine existence. If all things are made, and everywhere they bear the marks of being made—manufactured, as a hat or a coat, a watch or a loom, then they must have a maker—a creation supposes a Creator. If all things are under the regulation of law, does not law imply a law-giver? one who has intelligence to originate, and power to put into operation the law he has made?—dead matter cannot give to dead matter, fixed law. If the earth has a motion, must it not have a mover? Matter cannot move itself from rest, nor bring itself from motion to rest, without some agency *ab extra*. Plato, in his Phædrus, says: "Every body which is moved from without, is soulless, but that which is moved from within of itself, possesses a soul—such is the very nature of the soul." If there is contrivance, and we live and move amidst the most exquisite contrivances, there must be a contriver. To these well known argu-

ments it is quibblingly replied, may not a contriver have another contriver? may not a law-giver be preceded by another law-giver? and may not the maker of all things, have a maker? No; nothing is more unphilosophical than to assign two causes to a given effect, where one cause is sufficient. The mind constitutionally travels from effect to cause, and looking at the creation as an effect, it sees nothing equal to its production but an intelligent First Cause; and having found that cause, it there reposes, unless perverted by some moral obliquity.

MAN'S RESPONSIBILITY.

Free agency and man's responsibility we shall put together, because they must stand or fall together. If man is not a free agent, man is not a responsible agent. The converse of this we hold to be true. We are told, "it is impossible to build up a system of religion, if man is not a free agent. I ask you who are Christians, can you tell me? Had you been born in Turkey, what would you have been there? or had you been transported to Hindoostan in your infancy, would you have been there Christians, or Brahmins? It is by the accident of your birth, in the first place, that you have become Christians." It is added, "you are to believe that which has the strongest evidence in its favour, you are to believe that which you cannot disbelieve. I defy you to believe anything to be false, which you know to be true. Your belief rests either on imagined or real evidence. If you had real, tangible evidence,

you cannot object to that belief—your belief is forced upon you—you cannot avoid it."

In this statement there is a great truth, but a great error; for great errors cannot be propagated without great truths, to give them currency. And frequently the greater the truth, the greater the error. The truth is in representing man as believing according to evidence, and also in ascribing great influence to circumstances in the formation of character, both in early life, and indeed through life; but the error lies in representing his belief as *forced* upon him (though in fact belief is a moral result, reached by moral means), but especially in giving man's circumstances a supremacy over man's will. If we can show that men rise superior to circumstances, and that similar circumstances produce opposite results, we damage the doctrine that man's belief is according to circumstances. In the same family, where training and privileges have been equal, one lad will rise to intellectual and moral greatness, another will sink to stupidity and degradation. This difference cannot be accounted for from circumstances, but from *feebleness* of will in the one case, and from the *forcefulness* of will in the other. Ferguson, the poor Scotch shepherd, became a celebrated astronomer. And Franklin, the poor printer, became distinguished for science, politics and literature. Multitudes have been shepherds and printers, who never rose to any distinction, because they lacked Ferguson's and Franklin's free powerful action of the will. The circumstances were there, but the will was wanting. Is not man a free agent?

Does not all history say so? Do not every-day facts attest this? Does not man's universal consciousness intelligently interrogated, reply, yes? Whatever consequences may be involved in the admission, we are bound to admit that man is free in practising virtue or vice. Deny it, but look at consequences. If a man is virtuous, he is virtuous from circumstances. If he is vicious, he is vicious from circumstances. If he is a drunkard, he is a drunkard from circumstances. If he is sober, he is sober from circumstances. If he is honest, he is honest from circumstances. If he is a rogue, he is a rogue from circumstances. Surely these are sentiments which none present will endorse. The doctrine of absolute necessity arising from man's circumstances, is one that we ought instantly to repudiate and trample under foot.

If we deny man's free agency, we may, we must deny man's responsibility. We hold that human responsibility, using the term in its highest sense, is not an opinion to be proved, but a principal and obvious fact in the natural history of man. He is universally conscious of it, with the exception of individuals or races long brutalized by sensuality and ferocity; and that of a handful of sophists, who have talked themselves and others into an unreasoning infidelity. To parry the arguments for man's responsibility, and to make his irresponsibility appear as plausible as possible, our opponent says: "You tell me that God is the Creator, that he called into existence everything that now exists, that he arranged, contrived, planned, designed the whole of

that vast system which we now behold, that he is the author, the director and the mover of those vast orbs that roll in the illimitable ocean of space, that from the first time he called them into existence, he saw from the first the end. You tell me that he saw what would take place, that he had seen from the beginning the whole of the process, the end, the middle and the beginning. I ask you, could a God foresee that which was not destined, that which was not arranged? Could a God see that a certain thing would come to pass, if he had not definitely, infallibly fixed certain laws, and from the first, forced certain consequences and certain events? If God created you, how did he create you? Did he not bring you into the world without your consent, without your having a word about it? Did he not place you in a world of temptation and snares? Did he not see everything which you would do? I ask then, how can you be responsible who have had no say in the matter?"

In religious warfare let us try to be truthful. The statement just read, is a compound of truth and error. It has just enough of truth, to conceal the error; and just enough of error, to neutralize the truth. The statement is widely at variance with the universal consciousness of men in relation to personal responsibility; also with the opinions of enlightened Christians of all sections of the church; and above all with the clear bold representations of Divine Truth. The statement goes on the assumption that as God has created all things, governs all things, sees all things, therefore he decrees all things, necessitates

all the actions of man, and binds him as by iron law in an iron course, to reach inevitable results. This is a caricature of God's government, a system shaped for us, not *by* us, and one that we disown and turn our back upon. We believe that God created all things, and governs all things; and that as infinitely wise, and almighty, he decreed what he does, and does what he decreed. His decrees are all on the side of good not on the side of evil. "God the creator did not make evil, he made nothing which was not beautiful and good; for the maker is good. But the man who was made, was a free-willed creature, not possessing a ruling understanding, not governing all things by thought, authority and power, but being a creature, and therefore having a susceptibility for contrarieties of will. He, from being free-willed, generates evil, which becomes so by accident, being nothing if thou dost it not: for it is called evil from its being willed, and thought to be so; not being so from the beginning, but an after birth. Man being free-willed, a law was laid down by God; not without need. For if man had not the power to will and not to will, why should a law have been established? For a law will not be laid down for an irrational being, but a bridle and a whip; but for man, a command, and a penalty to do or for not doing, what is ordered."* These are, we think, the felt opinions of Christians in general, relative to the government of God, and the responsibility of man.

In giving out these views, we are not insensible to the difficulties they involve. They meddle with

* Hippolytus and his Age, 4 vols., 8vo.

matters which are not explained, and which are not explainable. But a religion without a mystery, would be like a Temple without a God. We conceal not the fact, that while we are saved according to God's will, we are also saved according to our own will; and that between these two propositions there is a chasm, which no human reason can ever bridge over. Sir William Hamilton says: "It is irrational, as it is irreligious, on the ground of human understanding, to deny, either on the one hand, the foreknowledge, predestination and free grace of God, or, on the other, the free will of man; that we should believe both, and both in unison, though unable to comprehend either even apart. This philosophy proclaims with St. Augustine, and Augustine in his maturest writings: 'If there be not free grace in God, how can he save the world; and if there be not free will in man, how can the world by God be judged:'* or as St. Bernard says, 'Abolish free will and there is nothing to be saved; abolish free grace, and there is nothing wherewithal to save.'"† Admitting the difficulties we have honestly stated, look at the New Testament on this question. While on the one hand, it holds up God's free grace in man's salvation fearlessly (and we were made to feel this by our opponent, in the somewhat rude rough handling of the IX. Chap. of Romans), on the other hand, it every where insists on man's personal responsibility. Its earnest reasonings, its pointed appeals, its tender touching exhortations, and its

* Ad Valentinum, Epist. 214

†De gratiâ et Libero Arbitrio. C. i.

prospective rewards and punishments go on the ground of man being an intelligent accountable being.

Let us briefly show our opponents the difficulties they have to face, from a denial of a personal God, and of man's personal responsibility. This is an opinion, contrary to the deep seated sentiments of all nations in all ages. No nation can be found where the conscience does not excuse or else accuse, one another. Where did these nations get these sentiments? They were not priest-gotten, but laws written in the heart. If men are not accountable, why do all languages abound in words which imply accountability? Language is a very exact reflection of a people's opinions. Deny man's responsibility, and we deny the distinction between good and evil—between right and wrong. Virtue and vice may change places, if the change produce no conventional inconvenience. But can any nation be found which, as a nation, ever confounded these things together? Can any individual be found that wholly did so? Can any one look upon an act of murder as he would upon an act of pure benevolence? Should not any of us feel differently if we were the means of accidentally putting to death a fellow creature, than if we had slain him with a Cain-like revenge? The two deeds cannot be regarded in the same light. But why not, if men are merely the creatures of circumstances? We have been told again and again in this room, that man has no power over his belief; and Lord Brougham's sentiment has been re-echoed to the ends of

the earth, "that man has no more control over his belief than he has on the hue of his skin, or the height of his stature." If he has no control over his belief, he has none over his conduct, because his behaviour flows from his belief, and his practices are the offspring of his principles. But let us pause, to look at the consequences of this doctrine. If a man refused to pay a just debt when he has the ability, but not the disposition to do so, and on being pressed for payment should say, I believe it is my duty not to pay, and a man has no power over his belief, I am the creature of circumstances and cannot help disowning my debt—if another has been early initiated into wily crafty practices, schooled in deceit and knavery, and he believes it is his vocation to overreach us in business, to defraud us of money, and live by ill gotten gains of swindling and villainy, —this man can shelter himself under the plea that he has done nothing but what he believed it right to do; and no one is accountable for his belief—he is but the creature of circumstances and cannot be held responsible. If he is a rogue and a villain he has been made so, he has not made himself so.

Agreeably to the doctrine of non-responsibility, a man may be a forger, a thief, a murderer; but why should he be apprehended, imprisoned and punished according to law? Forger, thief or murderer as he is, how can he be accountable? he has only acted out his belief, he is the creature of circumstances, he has no more power to make himself than he has to alter "the hue of his skin or the height of his stature." Virtue and vice, praise and blame, good and evil, are

distinctions without differences, they are delusions and forgeries, too long palmed upon the people. It is unmeaning to appeal to men's fears for order and reformation. Our laws, courts of justice, judges and juries, prisons and punishment, are unnecessary things, and ought to be swept away at once. They cannot control men's belief. They cannot alter men's circumstances.

Who amongst us does not start back from reasonings so reckless as these? Will Englishmen ever say, God speed to sentiments so diabolical? Do we not see that immorality and irresponsibility are twin-born children? No family government, and consequently no family happiness, can obtain when accountability does not exist. There is no society, be it social, political, scientific or religious, could hold together for a year when personal accountability is not felt. All social order and all the good of government depend upon men feeling responsible to each other and to God. Subvert this feeling, and we subvert all order. Let men do as they list, and let nothing but circumstances shape their course, and the wildest confusion and anarchy would riot and revel in our land. Let not the advocates of these doctrines say, these are the true doctrines, propounded so ably by R. Owen, but society is not prepared to adopt them. But let them form a colony in this land, or in some other land—for there is room enough in the wide world for such an experiment—where our social order shall have no place, where all things shall be had in common, where the marriage bond shall be dissolved, where all punishment is put

away, and no responsibility of any kind is admitted, where virtue and vice, and good and evil, are the same things, and where every man is bound by the necessity of circumstances. How many could be found to join a community of this kind? Who would be the colonizers in such a colony? Every attempt to do something of this sort has hitherto been an utter failure; and until we can have this utopia of circumstances realized, its projectors have no claim to public confidence.

FALL OF MAN.

Important as is this doctrine discussed, time and space demand as much brevity as possible. All religious men admit that the fall of man, and the entrance of sin into the world are perplexing questions, whatever theory is adopted. Infidels are fond of flippantly treating the Scripture account of man's fall, and of caricaturing its circumstances, of sneeringly speaking of the naked pair, of the forbidden tree, and of eating the apple; and then with a contemptuous chuckle, and with a bragging bearing, saying—this is the religion of the Bible. What great truth is there to which men have not objected, and which they have not sought to turn into folly by ridicule? What great harm, it is said, is there in eating of an apple; that it should put our first parents and all their posterity into peril, and should entail so fearful consequences upon the world at large? We are not simply to look at the eating of the apple, but as a distinct and sufficient test of obedi-

dience. This it was, and the accompanying circumstances are, in comparison with this, of minor moment. The charge was—"In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." The lecturer said, "Now, I want to know, what effect a commandment of this kind could have upon Adam and Eve, who did not understand it—who knew neither good nor evil? How could God think of giving a commandment to individuals who did not even know that they were naked?" These questions, surely, are put forth as a little banter upon the Bible, not a real objection to a real difficulty. Our first parents' condition was good; and were they not conscious of the good, and therefore must have known good? As to the evil, they were not conscious of it as of the good, but they must have known it, from the law which God imposed upon them—the commandment with which he fenced round the tree of good and evil. As to their not knowing that they were naked, they had no intimation of this, either from intuition or revelation, till after their fall; and therefore it is idle to conclude that because they were ignorant of their nakedness, they were also ignorant of good and evil.

On the origin and prevention of evil, our opponent says: "Did he (God) allow the rebellious disposition to become rife, when he had power to prevent it? They who do not prevent crime, share the guilt." If this is true, what a fearful amount of guilt lies at the door of our government, and of all other governments. The province of the governor is not to stand sentinel, with a flaming sword in his

hand at the entrance of every course of crime, but when crime is committed, to take cognizance of it and to punish it. The magistrate may know a citizen with longing propensities to forgery, but to prevent the forgery, all that he can do, as a man, with such a citizen is to expostulate with him, and, as a magistrate, to expound the law, and to point out the consequences of its violation. But he uses no physical means to prevent the forgery, and ought not to do; and if the crime of forgery is committed, he does not share the guilt. He proclaims the majesty of the law, and the consequences of breaking it, and in this way aims at the prevention of crime. God made man an upright, moral being, placed him under a moral Government, (*i.e.*, a government of motives) plied him with all moral means—told him of the law he is under, and the consequences of violating it; but if these moral means fail, God could not stultify himself by descending from moral means, to the use of direct physical force means for the prevention of man's fall. Man thus governed would but be a mere machine, moving as he was moved, acting as he was acted upon.

If we had laws in our land which took cognizance of all our actions, and to give them effect, we had policemen who stood at our elbow, and were always dangling at our side; or, if we had a sort of Russian espionage among us, so that the whole kingdom would be a great Dionysian ear to listen to every man's words, and a govenmental inquisition to search into every man's practices; our opponents would not say this would preserve, but destroy the liberty of

men. Adam was not a responsible agent, but a mere organized machine, if he were not free to fall and free to stand. We are not moral beings if we are not governed by motives; if any thing like physical restraint or constraint bears upon us, the freedom of our moral agency is destroyed.

Arguments the most undeniable may be adduced in proof of the fall. The universal consciousness of men, in relation to this great fact, cannot fairly be denied. Almost all feel that their condition is unnatural and degenerate, implying a higher former condition. Where did this consciousness come from? What interpretation shall we put upon it? Is it the shadow of nothing? Is it a mere delusive, injected, conventional feeling? If so, let us look for a universal consciousness, that stands for nothing but delusion and shadows. We may look, but we shall look in vain. To find it, would be to find one of the greatest anomalies of nature. General consciousness must have some great fact to produce it, or we have an effect without a cause. It is as truly a record of something that happened in the history of man, or of some great law of his nature, as the plant and animal fossil remains in the British Museum, are a record that these plants and animals once lived. To scratch out the consciousness from the mind of mankind, that man is a fallen creature, would just be as easy as to scratch out the indented impressions of organized beings from the strata of the earth. Look to the traditions of nations, as evidences of the inbred feeling of men in regard to the fall. The Scripture narrative, simple and

despised as it is, has originated, in a traditional shape, the early history of all nations. Maimonides and Sanchoniathan will tell you, that this record lives in symbols of the Eastern world; and in the Grecian Mysteries, the name and the form of the serpent were both presented to the ear and to the eye; the name at the same time being that of the common mother of mankind, drew the points of analogy between the tradition and the record, the symbol and the fact, still closer. "Passing from ancient history, to the annals supplied by modern times, we learn that the Mosaic history of Adam and Eve, of the tree and the serpent, and of the circumstances of the fall, is to be traced amidst the traditions of Peru and of the Philippine Isles, thus penetrating the idolatrous recesses of the New World.* In one word, it requires very little acquaintance with ancient history, and with idolatrous rites, to discover in the one, fragments, and in the other, symbols, evident traces of this Scriptural narrative of the fall; but it will be no small difficulty in the way of those who deny its authority, to account for its subsistence under these forms, without admitting that it was universally received as a record of facts."

In addition to consciousness, as unquestionable testimony to the fact of the fall, the old book, the Bible, must be got rid of, it must be shown to be a book of legends—a cunningly-devised fable—ere

* Maimonides, Sanchoniathan, Plutarch, Le Pluche, Grotius, &c., &c.

real discredit can be thrown upon man's fall. Before this can be done, some uninvoked Hercules must set his shoulder to the wheel—some huge rocks must be tunnelled, which have not yet been tunnelled—and some mountains of difficulty must either be melted away or scaled, which remain unmelted or unscaled, notwithstanding the bold efforts of ages. The Bible, our opponents tell us, has often died and been buried; but somehow or other it always rises and lives again, and rises and lives with increasing vitality and energy. It is circulating with wonderful rapidity. Its translation into 148 languages attests this fact. These are as distinct living languages to proclaim to earth's remotest bounds the world's sinfulness and the world's Saviour. With these obstacles in the infidel's path, let him not on the Scripture narrative of the fall be like—

——"youthful and unhandled colts,
Fetching mad bounds, bellowing, and neighing loud."

If the Bible fall, as a falsehood, then all the doctrines it contains will fall with it. If the Bible stand, as all truth will stand, then all objections to its doctrines are worse than useless.

THE ATONEMENT.

The objection to this fundamental doctrine of our holy religion is, the innocent suffering for the guilty. This is dwelt upon, and a few strong paragraphs are put forth to show how monstrous it is, to suppose that Christ should die "the just for the unjust." The objection overlooks a principle prevalent in all ages, among all people, and in operation in every day's doings.

A worthless father may spend his time, his health, his money, in deeds of dishonour and degradation, in consequence of which a worthy wife and helpless children may be reduced to poverty and wretchedness. A nobleman may by the enormity of some public offence lose all his titles, may confiscate his property, and may be reduced to bankruptcy and beggary. His children may be no sharers in his crime, but they are sharers in its consequences. A vile and reckless captain in crossing the Atlantic may, by his drunkenness, lose all command of his vessel, and it may be lost, and a hundred lives may perish with it. These are not instances, analogous to Christ's substitution for the sinner, because they have nothing vicarious in them; but will any say, that in these cases, the innocent do not suffer in consequence of the guilty? The history of Zaleucus, the King of the Locrians, and disciple of Pythagoras, is patent to every school lad versed in history. He made a law against adultery, and the penalty of its violation was, that whosoever should be guilty of it, should lose both his eyes. His own son was the first to violate the law. That government might be upheld in all its integrity, and law maintained in all its majesty, the father consented to lose one of his own eyes, and the son one of his. Thus we have shown, and might make our case still stronger, were it demanded, that nothing is more common, than the innocent suffering through the guilty.

This doctrine, it is said, "destroys the foundation of morality." When reasoning is opposed to well known facts, we may be sure it is not true but false

reasoning. There is no book in existence that contains purer and more extensive morality than the Bible which reveals the doctrine of atonement very fully; and those who have believed and loved the Scriptural atonement of Christ, an atonement pruned of spurious traditional excrescences which a perverted Christianity has always added to our holy religion, have maintained a higher standard of morality, than any other portion of mankind. And the argument we have frequently referred to, may again be quoted, viz., Where did the heathen nations get their notions of atonement? Shadows cannot come from nothing. A universal error cannot produce a universal religious usage. If mankind had not had a deep, heart-felt need of a propitiation for sin, sacrifices and altars, temples and priests would not have abounded in lands where the light of revelation has not shone.

CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS.

Prayer and Providence we shall not discuss, as doing so would protract our remarks unduly, and there is no need for it, as they are topics that may be amply handled in succeeding lectures. One point, we cannot omit to notice, and that is the untruthful interpretations our opponents put upon Scripture. They affirm with emphasis that the New Testament teaches despotism. As proof of this Paul's language is quoted. "Let every soul be subjected to the higher powers. For there is no power, but of God; the powers that be are ordained of God." We say,

as it has been frequently said in this discussion, that the principle of government is referred to, in this passage, not any form which government may take. It does not sanction the wrong doings of governors, nor allow them to put might in the place of right. We appeal to the Apostle's own example as proof of this. He and Silas were unjustly imprisoned at Philippi. Does he quietly succumb to this deed of despotism, and walk out of prison at the bidding of the magistrates? No! like a man who valued liberty, without licentiousness, he indignantly protested against the deed, and said, "They have beaten us openly uncondemned being Romans, and have cast us into prison, and now do they thrust us out privily? Nay, verily, but let them come themselves and fetch us out." On another occasion, before the Roman governor, he appealed to Cæsar, lest he should be crushed by the despotism of the Jew and the Gentile in Judea. When he was before the Jewish council, the High Priest commanded them that stood by him to smite him on the mouth. But see the burning rebuke he threw back upon him; "Then said Paul unto him, God shall smite thee, thou whited wall: for sittest thou to judge me after the law and commandest me to be smitten contrary to the law?" Is this conduct anything like the conduct of a man who preaches up despotism? Or does the apostle give a precept of which he is not the example? If the New Testament teach passive obedience and non-resistence, why have the slaveholders of South America made so stringent laws against its being taught to their slaves? Its free-

dom slays slavery. Why has the Roman Church put a ban upon the free use of the Scriptures? Because it is well known that such a use would be fatal to her long cherished, splendid despotism. In those countries of the world, and in those countries only, where the Bible has the largest place, civil and religious freedom has the largest place. Every country in the world without the Bible, is without a freedom worthy of the name of freedom. With these facts before us how can any man say that the New Testament preaches up despotism? It sinks not the citizen in the saint; and makes not null and void the liberty of the man, by the liberty of the Christian.

At the close of the lecture, great stress was laid upon the enslaved, degraded condition of Hungary, Austria, Tuscany, &c, and ribald questions were put to this effect—If we had a Father in Heaven, would he allow people to be down-trodden by despots? This question often repeated in different forms, overlooks the fact that God is a judge, as well as a Father, a moral governor as well as a parent. With despotism, oppression and injustice, whether at home or abroad, we have no more sympathy than our opponents. We hate them and denounce them; we are anxious to see the working classes take their rightful social and political position. We hail every just and intelligent movement towards this. We give utterance to these sentiments both in private and public without any let and hindrance. We are not curtailed in speech, as it has been meanly insinuated, *because* we are paid ministers. We are not restrained

in thought by any monied power. We call no man master. We are as free, as the freest of England's sons, in the expression of our opinions. We are the children of the Puritans, who kept alive the sparks of liberty in the reign of the Stuarts; and in the cause of liberty, shall we be recreants and apostates, the unworthy sons of such worthy sires? But large professions of sympathy with the down-trodden, with open assaults on Gospel truth, we cannot but suspect. Mr. Holyoake says: "The Bible is the ruin of progress;" and "the inequalities of this world, should be rectified in this world, and as far as secularism can prevail, they shall be;" or as he states in another place, "to effect the equalization of human condition." Does this mean to get up a crusade against property, to abolish all private rights, and to deny to every man a title to call anything his own? If so Mr. Holyoake is reproducing, but more stealthily, the pernicious doctrine of his friend and former associate, Mr. Owen, "that the institution of property was one of the great plagues of human society." Thus we have before us an old acquaintance with a new cloak, or decrepid socialism dressed in swaddling clothes and christened Secularism. To progress, thus understood, the Bible will be its ruin, and the friends of the Bible, its staunchest opponents.

The closing topic is, as to "being on the safe side, having two strings to the bow." The lecturer said: "If there is another world, as there may be, it rests all there; it may be, it rests on probability; it is a may-be, and as sailors say, it is a may not be." *Just look at this* statement. It is to us an extra-

ordinary one. We can understand it when a man says: "There is no God, and no life to come, therefore give all your attention to this life." But when one says, there may be a life to come, there may be a God, and yet recommends us to give all our attention to the present world, to the real world; we stand aghast at such an one. Does not common sense say, "unless you are sure that there is neither a God nor immortality, make it your first business to provide for the contingency of their existence." If we cannot demonstrate the non-existence of God, and a judgment to come, there is a reckless hardihood in living as though we could. Men do not act in this way for this world. A man may have travelled oftentimes by rail in safety from Leeds to London, and the probability is that he will always do so; but there is a *possibility* that he may be overtaken by a railway calamity, and on that bare possibility he takes advantage of the railway insurance. The manufacturer builds his factory, with the probability that it will stand without any material damage happening to it; but there is a possibility that it may be destroyed by fire, but that he may provide against all possible risk, he cheerfully pays a yearly sum for insurance, and covers himself, as far as property can do so, from calamitous contingencies. But an infidel says there may be a life to come—there may be a God, but do not think about any life to come, think only about this life—do not trouble yourselves about a God who may judge you, but trouble yourselves about mending this world, and doing the best for yourselves.

But is this wise counsel? Is it such counsel as men adopt for this world? Certainly not; great stress has been laid upon mending this world, and leaving it better than we found it; and this it is said will be the best preparation for any world that may come. But who says this? The man that says this, makes himself judge of what is preparation for another state. We demur, however, to his authority. We take Bible testimony, and the experience of good men in all ages, a very cloud of witnesses on this point, as far higher and better authority. We have only to say in conclusion, to all present, and especially to young men just forming their opinions, our opponents admit that there may be a life to come—a God to judge us—on this ground of probability we entreat you to pause, ere you take a plunge into the future. Ponder the path of your feet. Think of the words, "may and may not be." You *may be* weighed in the balances and found wanting—you *may be* summoned before God to stand face to face with him—you *may be* found with a lie in your right hand, a lie that may shut you out of heaven, a lie that may shut you up in hell, and the moment you reach there, you may learn that "hell is a truth seen too late." I speak thus not for victory's sake, but for truth's sake.

LECTURE II.

"THOMAS PAINE, HIS LIFE, TIMES AND OPINIONS."

[PREFATORY NOTE.—This lecture was prepared in reply to one bearing the same title, delivered at Thornton by Mr. Robinson of Wilsden. I have, therefore, been guided entirely by that in the mode in which I have dealt with it, and in the parts of Paine's career which have been treated with more distinctness than the rest. Mr. Robinson's lecture contained no statement or examination of Paine's political or religious opinions. His sole object seems to have been to make out a good character for Paine, and thereby commend his opinions to his hearers.]

WHEN a gentleman changes his name, it is generally concluded that he has some good and urgent reason for doing so; that it is not in mere whim and caprice that he will cast away his patronymic, and adopt some other designation than that by which his father and his paternal ancestors have been known for generations. One sometimes hears of its being done to inherit a fortune, with which the testator has bequeathed what is in most eyes a much less

valuable thing than gold—his name. Sometimes it is done out of veneration to the person whose name is adopted. And sometimes to get rid of a bad one, one which does not sound well, or which implies something disagreeable, or has some unpleasant connexion and association with what is a disgrace.

Modern times have furnished us with an instance of a whole set of persons changing their collective name, a much more remarkable thing than when done only by one man, and implying a proportionately stronger reason for the change, inasmuch as it has seemed desirable to such a number of various minds, and has secured their concurrent adoption of it throughout the kingdom.

They who have heretofore been known by the several appellations of Infidels, Atheists, Sceptics, Freethinkers and the like, have discarded them all, and claim now to be addressed as "Secularists," repudiating the application to them of any of the former titles. Of course they have the right to make such a change, and to expect that their neighbours will have the civility to call them as they wish to be called.

I can conceive a great number of reasons for the change, though I am ignorant if any of them has been put forth as *the* reason. There can be no doubt that the world has some unpleasant associations of human biographies with some of the other and older designations of those who hold opinions adverse to Christianity. And I am not in the least surprised that any men coming forward now as the world's regenerators, its emancipators from religious thral-

dom and the superstitions of ages, should be anxious to sever themselves from their predecessors in this work, and to wish the world to understand that they have no connection with any other regenerators who have flourished in the past. Considering the miserable failures which not a few of them have made, and the unpleasant pictures of human good which the career and end of some of them have furnished, it is only natural that that they who are their successors in opinion and in aim, should nevertheless be desirous to disavow their pedigree and sever themselves from the past.

Again, I can imagine that the more intelligent of those who hold these opinions, have come to perceive that the world has a great dislike of *negations*, that its mind was never made to dwell at ease amid an "everlasting No!" that to assume only a position of antagonism, and to bear a name indicative only of denial or of destruction, is to be weak; that men will not join themselves in any great number to any movement whose aim is merely to destroy and overturn, but must have some constructive plan before them. Moreover they may have found that to give themselves simply to denial, of course accompanied by disproof, is to assume a position logically false and indefensible; and so they have wisely changed their appellation, both for their own sakes and the spread of their opinions.

Or it may be that they have really changed their tactics and their ground, and so their change of name is merely a piece of honesty. They may have looked well at all past failures to overthrow the world's

belief in a God or a Providence, and to drive Christianity from its supremacy, and have determined not to renew the attempt, possibly to add another failure to the long series of discomfitures and losses: and they may have determined to try what the substitution of a new principle will do, which taking its place side by side with Christianity may perchance by degrees supplant and extrude it, and so obtain the victory which opposition has failed to secure.

Whatever be the actual reason, whether any or all or none of these, there is the change, significant of something: of some conviction or alteration in the party whose movements can never be matters of indifference to those who believe that in Christianity is the world's only hope, and God's revelation of truth. In making the change, *this* word—"Secularist"—has evidently been chosen to imply that they who adopt it, are believers in Time only and not in Eternity; that their principles of life are wholly secular and mundane, that they are under the influence of no motives but such as are supplied by what they can gather from observing the laws of the physical world and of human life. But now comes a question which I should much like to have answered. Does the name mean anything more than this? Have they withdrawn altogether from avowed opposition to Christianity? Do they wish it to be understood that they have no objection to it, if anybody can believe it, and that they are simply in the position of men who see no harm in it, but cannot believe it? Or do they feel that they must still do battle with it as pernicious error, and intend by their positive

name to indicate the truth which they oppose to Christianity?

It is of great importance to have this matter settled, for a great deal depends on it; at least, in reference to the way in which Christians have to deal with it. We are quite accustomed to these changes in the tactics of our opponents. Ever since infidelity or scepticism was born, it has been given to change. It is not the same thing, in form, in any two consecutive ages. It is moving in a perpetual circle around the citadel of the world's religion. It has tried all manœuvres and all kinds of weapons. It has assailed it from all possible points and in all imaginable uniforms. We are not surprised, therefore, to find another change. We only want to discover, if we can, just what it means, that we may know how to deal with it once more.

I will take two suppositions, one or other of which I think must be the real meaning, and shew you in what new aspect it presents the controversy betwixt us.

First, I will suppose that the adoption of the name "Secularist" implies, that they who wear it mean to intimate that they have no battle with Christianity, save such as is inevitable from the clashing of its principles with theirs, and would proclaim to the world that they do not pretend to act upon motives drawn from the future, because they are not certain that there is any future at all. Now it strikes one at once that there is no great need to form themselves into *a society*, if that is all they mean, because that is just what nearly all the world

is doing. With the exception of those who compose the real church of Christ, whose faith is not a mere name and an unthinking assent to Christianity, but a real living constant power over their life, the whole world is practically secularist, and is living solely by the light of the present, and under the impulse of the motives it supplies. Why then, we ask, make any noise about it, and mark yourselves out from a world from which you do not differ at all? Why lecture about it, and have any propagandism to spread a principle already acted on, whether acknowledged in words or not? Just fancy, for a moment, some missionary of this principle going into the Royal Exchange at London, or the Stock Exchange at Leeds or Bradford, or the Cloth-halls of any of our manufacturing towns, summoning around him the merchants and the brokers, and then beginning with much earnestness and point to urge them *not* to live for eternity, but to be very careful about the present life: insisting that it was very, very doubtful if earth were not all; the present existence the whole of human existence; and that therefore, until there was more certainty they had better make the most of this; be industrious and prudent, and make themselves as comfortable as possible; get as much money as they could honestly, and by no means let any dread of retribution hereafter fetter them in any of their actions here. Why, these merchants would turn away laughing and saying; "Either the man is mocking us, or he is mad: that is just what we are doing with all our might." And the instant hum of their bargainings, their busy buyings

and sellings, their sharp encounters of wit and cunning, would corroborate these assertions.

It seems tolerably clear then that "Secularist" means more than that, for I imagine *that* is too palpable a folly for any dozen men in one place to be chargeable with.

The other supposition which I will frame then, is this. That it means that those who have adopted it, intend to come forward still as the opponents of Christianity, only not as mere deniers and sceptics, but with a set of positive principles which they offer to the world in place of those which Christianity presents. They say, Christianity calls you to a certain course, founded upon certain considerations. We call you to another, founded upon other considerations, because we do not think the facts, upon which Christianity bases her appeal, are sufficiently proved. Now if this be the real state of the case, then it does not seem to me that our friends have any better chance of success than heretofore. I suppose that no secularist would avow or allow that his doctrines have an immoral tendency; but would affirm that virtue and all that is really noble in man is as much enjoined, by a due consideration of human welfare for this life, as for any future, if there be one. Then the difference betwixt them and Christians is merely one of degree. Secularism says—"Be virtuous, but there is no need to be religious." Christianity says—"Be virtuous AND religious. Let your religion be virtuous and your virtue religious." That is the teaching of the New Testament throughout. Secularism

says, "Pay good heed to your present life; to its comfort and rectitude; observe the great laws of your nature, or you will be a sufferer; act rightly towards society or you will bring upon it a curse of which you will not fail to participate." Christianity says, "Do all this—also because it is God's will, the desire of your Father in heaven—the design of your Creator when he made you: and also add to this, care for a *future* life, of which I assure you; look onward to it and expect it; if you live for this world so as to please God, you will have sown seed of bliss for that; or if you live with supreme reference to that, you will find that you have enhanced the worth and comfort and happiness of this." By saying this, you see, Christianity gives man a *hope*—a thing of mighty power with the human mind—which hope is to act as a motive and a restraint; yet in respect of the virtue of this earthly life, moving a man to nothing which secularism would condemn, restraining him from nothing which it would pronounce a good. It gives something higher to live for, and by so doing, additional inducement to live virtuously and wisely. Added to all this, it furnishes a solace and a support, when those trials and sorrows come which no secular prudence can avert, and no secular principles mitigate of their intensity of woe.

Now, looking at those two things, without prepossession in favour of either of them, but simply as a candid judge of their respective chances with the world, I think most people would say, "Well, mankind will chose that which offers it most, and

its virtue and comfort are most likely to be hastened by that which has the greatest power and adaptation to their production." Suppose you have a silver mine here, covered over with diggers all eagerly employed, and some one comes by and tells them of another mine of gold fifty miles off: think you the multitude would not speedily depart for the gold, leaving perhaps one or two determined sceptics behind, protesting that it was better to dig certain silver, even though gold might possibly be had at that distance, but which was somewhat uncertain.

So in the same way men will welcome that belief which offers them the most good, although they may not always live up to their faith.

I confess to you, that I enter upon my task of examining the biography of Thomas Paine, with some reluctance. You could not possibly have found me a human biography which would have afforded me less pleasant material to deal with. Nor could you have more keenly added to the dislike with which I touch it, than by presenting it to me in the light in which it has been presented to you. In standing over such a wretched, miserable, pitiable specimen of humanity, just to gaze for one's own curiosity or instruction, one may turn one's eye away from what is loathsome and revolting. But when one hears such a man lauded as a hero, as a teacher worth listening to long after he is dead; when it is not enough to take his opinions, which have outlived himself, but some must rake up a memory which the world had suffered to sink into merited oblivion, save where disgust and revolt had unwillingly re-

tained it; when the pall is lifted that oblivion had thrown over vices which, like hideous phantom-forms, crowd before our gaze whenever that name is mentioned; and we hear men saying, as they point beneath it—"See! there lies a man whose memory must not be lost—do homage to him, glance at his life, that you may gain reverence for his opinions:" then it behoves the lover of truth, at whatever cost, to tell the truth; to throw in the darker shades which his worshipper had omitted, and let the world see the true likeness of him, to whose echoing thoughts they are asked to give heed. Such a task is not to my taste—yet I undertake it for truth's sake. I had always rather praise than blame. I prefer to paint beauty to deformity. But I have so strong a dislike of the dishonesty, or the imbecility, which calls deformity beauty, that when I hear it, I must out with what seems to me the truth.

I should much like to know from our friends calling themselves "Secularists," why they have chosen Thomas Paine as one of their subjects wherewith to enlighten and improve the world. Is it merely a piece of hero-worship, on their part? Do they feel that as almost all societies, of all sorts of opinions, have their venerable names, which they love to pronounce and from time to time embalm in the memory of the fleeting generations, so they will have a hero-name? And if so, is this their only one? Is this their *greatest* name? Alas for them! if, whilst the philanthropists are thrilling their children's ears with the name and life of John Howard; if, whilst the advocates of religious liberty are plying the elec-

tricity that is in the words—"John Milton;" if, whilst Christians of all shades, are touching the subtle springs of lofty devotion, and pure ambition, with a list of magic names, including hundreds whose life was a perpetual fragrance, an orbit of lovely light: these men have no better name wherewith to charm their followers, and kindle their enthusiasm, than that of a man who always sunk to wretchedness, save when the bloody tide of revolution furnished sufficient of the element in which alone he seemed to exist; who lived an adulterer, and died a drunkard, and left upon the statue of liberty which he had helped to uprear, the stain of a dark and bloody hand, which ages cannot efface.

Or is it from a desire to spread more widely his political or religious opinions, that they have put forth again that name before the world, and endeavoured to hide the odium which nothing but the most determined blindness or scepticism, can sever from it? If so, I hope to shew you in this lecture, how much the world will have to thank and honour them for; and how much value the opinions gain from having found their high-priest, their chief apostle in Thomas Paine.

I shall not deem it needful to follow Mr. Robinson in the whole of his biographical sketch, nor shall I seek to add much, if anything, to the details of that life which he has presented to you. I shall have to differ with him in the estimate formed of one or two parts of Paine's conduct, and on which *Mr. Robinson* has founded a claim of honour for *Paine*. I shall also endeavour to do what he has

omitted, viz., to give you an idea of the *character* of the man, and to interpret his exploits by that. Mr. Robinson's lecture virtually says—See what he did, never mind what he was. And having seen what he did, I suppose he would exhort us to believe what he says. Now I say to you—See what he was. Then estimate the worth of what he did and of what he says.

On this point there is a passage in Mr. Robinson's opening remarks in which there lurks a fallacy which I must point out to you, and which affects the whole of what he has said to you about Paine. He says, "Truth is independent of men and of men's prejudices. You may conceive that you have truth and yet you may be in error. Truth is independent of men and of their characters. If Thomas Paine should be a drunkard, or if he should be a profligate character, it alters not the principles which he advocated. If they are true, they are true independently of Thomas Paine and his colleagues." All this is mere truism, I don't object at all to the doctrine. But then it altogether overlooks the fact that truth is not easy of discernment to every man. It assumes that when a thing is uttered, other people may easily know whether it is true or false. If so, why drag the man into the discussion. Why not let the drunkard and the profligate die, and the *truth* that the drunkard and the profligate taught, live without the disgrace of his name attached to it? But the fact is, that in dealing with any man's writings, we are dealing with his *opinions*: and whether *they are true* or not is not to be assumed. Those

opinions may relate to matters in which a man's moral bias must inevitably influence his thinkings; to matters in which belief cannot rest on demonstration, but on probabilities and presumptions. The principles which the man advocates, may be matters of sincere question and doubt with other men. And in such a case one may glean something of their value from knowing their source. And it is an assertion to which the common sense of nine-tenths of mankind will give ready assent, that the objections of a bad man—a man of known profligacy—to a religion which enjoins purity and temperance and godliness, are entitled to no weight whatever: and that however sensible and rational and clever he may be on other subjects, he has such a strong reason for wishing religion to be untrue, and by his badness makes our belief in his candour so difficult, that whatever *he* says in the discussion is just worth nothing at all, because he says it.

There are a great many people in the world, shallow thinkers, who like jumping to conclusions much better than labouring after them: who perpetually mistake their quick assent to a principle or opinion for proof of its truth. They like it and that's enough. They never set themselves candidly to examine the real worth of the doctrine: and the human mind is such an ingenious thing that it can manufacture some semblance of an argument for anything it wishes to believe. Moreover, one is perpetually seeing instances of the tendency of men to put implicit faith in those who have done some bold and daring things of which they approve, and

to receive all that they teach and assert on the mere strength of the fact that *they* have asserted it. Thus great controversies often come to range themselves around particular men, and if you get at the worth of the opinions of those leaders of public opinion, you have got at the worth of the belief of a large proportion of their disciples. Thomas Paine stands at the head of a school or sect of sceptics. Their objections are but a perpetual iteration of what he has said. His reasons are theirs. Their arguments are second editions of his, not improved. You may therefore deal most safely and conveniently with the whole of them by dealing with him, their founder and great standard of opinion.

But I pass now from the generalities to give you what appears to me to be a just estimate of the character of Thomas Paine. You have been put in possession of the main facts of his life. How he was sick of work, *i.e.*, staymaking, and went to sea: how he came back sick of the sea and got a place under government. How he lost that, got it again, lost it again, and went to America. The reason given by Mr. Robinson for this dislike of work is that he was a genius and a reader, and that geniuses and readers are not fitted for physical work. That is possible. But Paine boasts that he was not a reader—that he had never read. He would not have it thought that he was indebted to anybody for an opinion; but wished to have the sole credit for everything he wrote, whether on social science or religion. And if not a reader, but simply a genius, not a student, but only a bold and ardent thinker,

I don't see that work was so incompatible with that quick and unlaboured thinking which marks the genius from the commoner man. At all events, there is another aspect of this early feature of his life, which his after life does but too strongly corroborate; viz., that his was one of those restless, ungoverned spirits whose only motives are their impulses, which they obey without restraint from any principles and which make their lives such heterogenous mixtures of the good and bad. Two things, however, are indisputable about this brief portion of his career, whatever may have been the cause of his dislike of working at his trade. First, that the influence over him of one whom he confesses to have been "a good and moral father," was not enough to keep him from grieving that father most seriously by going to sea; and secondly, that he had not the sensitive honesty to abstain from trading in excisable articles whilst holding a situation in the Excise. Also that he was twice dismissed the service of the government, anyhow not a very creditable thing.

But he goes to America, and as you were told, at a time when the revolution was impending which was to sever America from her degrading dependence on the British crown. Here he found an element just suited to him. Waves of seeming accident had floated him into an eddy where he could begin to swim with pleasure to himself. He found a congenial element and atmosphere in the then state of American opinion, and very soon undertook a task in which all his genius could show itself to advantage. That

element and atmosphere was *Revolution*. Henceforth that was to be his sphere. There he was always at home and always did good service. Give him something to attack—no matter what—the oppression of excisemen—the humiliating subjection of a nation able to govern itself to one unable to govern it—the attempt of a swindler to get a sop for silence—or of a frenzied people to upset their government—the belief of the world in a religion of mercy and love—no matter what—give him an opportunity to assail and he was great. He did attempt, indeed, one constructive work—a bridge—which, whatever its merit, makes now marvellous little noise in the scientific world. But his constructiveness with one exception to be noted by and bye, spent itself there. He was happier and more at home in the other mood, and his fame is built entirely upon that. There can be no doubt that his pen did good service to the cause of American independence, and that in one or two of its crises, when it seemed about to fail, he uttered some electric words of "common sense," some stirring appeals at critical moments which turned the tide again, rallied the flagging spirits of the revolutionists and to all appearance saved the cause from ruin at that particular moment. For this the Americans owed him a debt of gratitude which they were not slow to acknowledge and repay.

But the work of Revolution was over in America, and Paine is destined again to bring misfortune on himself, by what he and his admirers call his integrity; by what I think deserves another name. He had accepted the office of secretary to the Com-

mittee of Foreign Affairs. He was vain enough afterwards in England to call himself the Secretary of Foreign Affairs for America. In accepting this office he was sworn to secrecy. He must have known that in such an office at such a time secrecy was an absolute necessity for the safe conduct of such affairs. He ought to have calculated all the contingencies to which his oath exposed him. Whilst thus occupied a man named Silas Deane goes to France and induces the king to help America in her contest against England. Deane makes use of this afterwards to endeavour to extort from the government a bribe not to betray the trust which he had accepted:—a most villanous piece of swindling certainly. An impulse of some kind, perhaps indignation, perhaps official vanity, moves Paine, and at once, reckless of his oath—reckless of consequences to America and France—though it might utterly undo all the work he had helped to do—though it might imbrue America and France, or England and France in a disastrous war—he outs with the whole and coolly invites the public to come into his office and see the papers. In plain terms he perjured himself, and proved himself utterly unfit to hold any responsible office in connection with the government of a people, which required the commonest prudence to keep it from disaster and disgrace. The consequence was of course his dismissal. He now turns his thoughts to England. Scents afar the smouldering embers of revolution which were soon to burst out in France, and thinks that if he could but get *secretly* to England and get out a work

there before he was discovered, he might overthrow the government of England and get up a revolution there in which he might once more freely breathe. I wonder what he would have thought of the friend who should have sworn to keep him in secret in England and afterwards have written a letter to the papers to say "Thomas Paine has come over to England to get up a revolution, and any body who will take the trouble to call at my house to morrow may apprehend him for treason:"—whether he would call that integrity.

Dissuaded, however, from his intention for the present, he goes to France, and thence, after a while, makes his way to England expressing his regret that he had not earlier fulfilled his intention of aiming at a revolution. In three years he manages to get into debt to the amount of £700; for which he is arrested and imprisoned, but released after three weeks of durance by an American firm. After this, when the revolution in France was rapidly reaching its height, Paine returns to France, eager to have his part in so congenial a work. Thence again he returns to England when the movements of France had spread their infection amongst his countrymen, and publishes the first part of his "Rights of Man." Back again to France he returns, however, in the same year; anxious to have a hand in both the fires, for whose full blaze of terror he was so intensely eager. Having been nearly executed by mistake by the mob, whose passion he had helped to inflame, he returns once more to England, and at a public dinner gives in a toast, the one sentiment of his life,

his ruling idea, the thing for which he lived, "THE REVOLUTION OF THE WORLD." In the following year, he is prosecuted for his seditious writings and flees to France. The result of this prosecution is that he is proclaimed an outlaw. During his stay in France, he had tried his hand once more at constructing, but his paper constitution, as Carlyle quaintly has it, "would not march," and in the end he becomes himself the victim of the spirit he had helped to raise, and is imprisoned by the Committee of Public Safety; meanwhile, however, having attempted another great destructive work—"the Age of Reason:" being an attempt to overturn the religious faith of Christendom. As soon as the bloody and destructive part of the French revolution was done, and it commenced its ludicrous series of constructive failures, Paine began to feel uneasy. He had worn out all the friendships he had been able to form in Paris; England was still against him, and so he resolved to return to America, which he did in company with a woman whom he had seduced from her allegiance to her husband, and with two of her sons. I will not follow him further here, the rest of his life is one of the most disgusting pieces of biography which any man can read.

Now from this rapid sketch of his active career, what light can be gained as to his principles and motives? Why, simply that he loved the excitement of revolution. It so happened that he was on the side of the people against kingly and oligarchical tyranny. But in his case it looks more like an *accident* than a principle. The *resistance* in this case

wholly arose from the people's side, and *resistance* was what he loved. If we would ascertain whether he really loved liberty, had any intelligent and benevolent desire for the independence and freedom of peoples, we must look at other parts of his life, and there we look in vain. Vanity and egotism, a hot and ungovernable temper, which sought to place to itself no bounds, and allowed itself the most disgraceful license of expression, are abundantly present in all his writings, and his whole career; and these are quite sufficient to account for all that he did: whilst on the other hand there are positive acts which are quite irreconcilable with the possession of any deep principles of freedom, integrity and benevolence. Of these we shall have to speak immediately.

But now let me for a moment suppose a case. A man comes forward into the midst of men and says: "Poor mortals, I pity you very much; you are all grievously oppressed; your social arrangements are great mistakes; you have no just notions of what is equitable and desirable in government and in all social institutions; you want liberty; you want new ideas of government; you want a new set of rulers, and a new set of rules for their guidance and your protection—let me teach you." And, being a stranger they ask him, who and what are you? On enquiry they find that in one of the most important of human and social relations—that in which, if anywhere, a man's benevolence, and tenderness, and justice will show itself—that of husband and wife, he feels himself at liberty to maltreat one wife, to marry another, to pursue a course of conduct to her which justifies

her in seeking to be divorced from him, to break up another man's home, adulterously to carry off his wife and two children to another land, and then to treat her with neglect and cruelty after all. They find that he has no regard for an oath, nor for any official integrity and propriety. They find that he repudiates his just and lawful debts, contracted through the excess of a brutal passion. They find him incapable of the sentiment of patriotism, feeling equally ardent in all causes no matter where, if only their aim be to overturn and destroy. Now I ask you all if they would not be justified, if it would not be the simple common sense in them to say: "Physician, heal thyself." You may have got just and right notions, but we had rather not have them from you. You may unfurl a banner of liberty, but we will not take it from your hands. You may perchance lead us to good, but we had rather not follow such a leader. And altogether we had much rather not have the infliction of opinions which come from a mind and heart so utterly corrupt and debased. We can get light from a torch of pitch, but we prefer sunlight, without smoke and stench and blackness from the very fount of light. Starving men may *live* by bread kneaded by the filthiest hands, but they must be starving, not to loathe it. And if we are to take anything upon your authority, being unable for ourselves to examine it, then we will have nothing to do with you. I say that a people who did not make such a reply, would show themselves fit to be led only by such a man, and therefore incapable of ascertaining truth.

Transfer the supposition to religion, and matters become worse. Here is a beautiful temple reared in the midst of the world, pure and holy. Its gates are open to all. Within it words of mercy and gentleness, words of loftiest virtue and nobleness are ever echoing. There is comfort for the dreary, rest for the weary, strength for the faint, pardon for the guilty, light for the blind, treasure for the poor, joy for the sorrowful, balm for the wounded, and a bright vision of endless life and joy beyond the tomb. Tens of thousands have entered it and found all they desired and more than all. They have been hallowed, and elevated, and ennobled, and enriched, and strengthened, and comforted, and cheered. The noblest employment of the world is found there—the worship of a wise and loving God. Its presence and service in the world redeems it from being the home of mere grovellers, who live only to die. And lo! at the entrance of that temple, gazing with sunken, sallow, bloodshot, envious eye, on bands of men heroically struggling after virtue—on groups of widows and mourners whose tears are being wiped away by angel hands—on multitudes of the young who are drinking in the highest wisdom and the loftiest inspiration, who go forth to be the world's patriots, and philanthropists, and purifiers,—a little old man is standing with grisly beard, and filthy skin, and drunkard's blotch, and palsied limb, fresh from a libertine's couch, turned out of the house of friend after friend for habits which made him intolerable to all save Christian pity, dreading death, and he cries with his hollow voice to them all: "Ye are either

hypocrites or dupes. Come out from that temple. Your tears are not wiped, your hearts are not comforted, your lives are not mended, it's all a lie and a cheat, come out, for I am about to pull it about your ears and bury the knaves who built it beneath its ruins." Can you not fancy you see a smile of incredulous pity fill the place, or perhaps even a thrill of righteous indignation at the insult and the blasphemy. Might not one of them go up to him and say, "Poor old man, drink has fevered thy brain, lust has warped thy judgment, long accustomed to bear the foul without loathing; nature's great laws begin to work, and thou now loathest the pure. What canst *thou* know about the comfort, and the strength, and the joy, and the nobleness of religion? Thou hast never looked at it. What about the hope of immortality? Thou hast every reason to shut it out from thee and to wish death to be thy last doom. The Bible is no book for thy distempered eye; thou canst not judge rightly a single line. Thy professed belief in a God is worthless, for it is no power with thee; equally worthless thy professed unbelief in Christianity. No! No! old man! thou mayest leave the stain of thy dark hand upon the pillars of this temple to be an everlasting memorial of thy folly; thou mayest leave the hollow echo of a drunkard's trembling tongue within these walls; thou mayest show the world what a profligate thinks of its religion, and leave it to draw its own inference of its value from that—and that is all thou canst do. Only kindred folly or like profligacy will believe thee or honour thee. It is not such as thou canst expel

the faith of eighteen centuries from the world, nor can a man whose whole life is a huge and hideous folly cast the dawn of an 'age of reason' upon men who think and know they have a better and higher light than reason can ever be—the revelation of God."

If Mr. Robinson had entered upon an examination of any of Mr. Paine's opinions, political or religious, I should have felt myself bound to have followed him there. But as he has not done so, I shall not trouble you with any exposition of sentiments on politics, which, whether true or false, would have to be received from one so unfit to teach any point of social science, because himself so socially vicious: and I certainly shall not rake up the mud of his infidelity, which I have examined in vain for any trace of candour, intelligence or research. The first part of the "Age of Reason" is professedly written without a knowledge of the Bible, and is nevertheless an attempt to prove its untruth. The second part is written with a Bible beside him, and consists in great part of a repetition of the first. Of his criticism I will just give you one specimen, by which you may judge what was the kind of intelligence which he brought to bear upon the question whether the Bible was the Book of God or not. He is trying to convince his readers that the writers in the Bible, whom we call prophets, were merely poets. At the foot of the page there occurs the following: "As there are many readers who do not see that a composition is poetry unless it be in rhyme, it is for their information that I add this note. . . To show

that these writings (the prophetic books) are composed in poetical numbers, I will take ten syllables as they stand in the book, and MAKE *a line* of the same number of syllables as they stand in the book (heroic measure), that shall rhyme with the last word. *It will then be seen that the composition of these books is poetical measure. (!)* The instance I shall produce is from Isaiah,

> 'Hear, O ye heavens, and give ear, O earth,
> The Lord himself doth call attention forth.'

"Another instance I shall quote is from the mournful Jeremiah, to which *I shall add two other lines,* for the purpose of carrying out the figure and showing the intention of the poet.

> '*O that mine head were water, and mine eyes*
> Were fountains, flowing like the liquid skies,
> Then would I give the mighty flood release,
> And weep a deluge for the human race.'"

Such is a specimen of Paine's criticism of the Bible, copied verbatim, I assure you, from the "Age of Reason." Alas for the "Age," if that be the "Reason." This is no piece of sarcasm invented by me to throw ridicule upon this great head of a school of sceptics. It has been thought worthy to be printed by him and by those who since his death have been his editors and publishers. I think most of you will agree with me in thinking that if this be a fair specimen of the intelligence of the "Age of Reason," there is not much more in his mental and in his moral qualifications to fit him to be any man's instructor upon any matter of reason or belief. It is

quite true that he has disciples. There are men now whose lectures and arguments in opposition to Christianity are but the repetition of his. In vain have Parker, Strauss and Newman called them to occupy higher ground, and use weapons of a finer temper and a keener edge. They neither like such weapons nor are capable of handling them. The coarse, ignorant sneer, the half-jocose, half-malicious leer of his sentences suits them better every way. They can understand that. They can manage that kind of argument. It scarcely exposes them at all to the deadly fire of severe logic. It is the sort of thing which they know will take best with a certain class of minds always to be found around them, and they therefore still make the "Age of Reason" their arsenal, notwithstanding that its stores are of the calibre and quality of the sample a little while ago produced.

In place then of amusing or disgusting you with any additional extracts of wisdom from a book, of the appropriateness and modesty of whose title one may be excused for having some doubts, let me occupy the remainder of your time by a few remarks upon what appear to be the requisite qualifications for a real infidel: and upon one of the great conditions upon which alone it is possible for men to have faith in such a book as the Bible and such a religion as Christianity.

To affect any surprise at the existence of such a thing as infidelity would be to betray an ignorance and want of reflection, such as few men would like to have laid to their charge. However lamentable

and deplorable a thing it may appear to us to be; however distressing the picture which forms itself to our mind, of a man putting from him the only light which can make him wise to salvation, and the only power which can effect his salvation; however heinous the crime, as we deem it, of first rejecting, and then denying or blaspheming, the record God hath given us of Himself, we cannot persuade ourselves that, seeing man is what he is, such a thing was not inevitable. We cannot conceive of any mode in which God could have done what the Bible on the one hand and our own consciousness, experience and observation, on the other, declare to be necessary, *i.e.*, could have given us light and authoritative teaching from without ourselves, which should on the one hand inevitably secure the universal acceptance of mankind, and on the other leave man's responsibility, *i.e.*, his own intelligent voluntary choice and action, in full force. Wherever the revelation does not overbear both the reason and the will, *i.e.*, wherever conviction is not a miracle wrought on the judgment but a change produced in the judgment, there infidelity must be at least *possible*. And if possible, then with such temptations of various kinds as we know men are subject to;—with pride of reason, force of passion, love of this world, haughty spirit of insubordination, aversion to God through mistake of his character,—with these and many other causes at work, it is all but inevitable that infidelity should exist. In such a world, and with human nature so much disturbed and deranged as all must confess it is, "offences

must needs come." There are great Divine irrevocable laws of mind and soul whose product would only have been beauty and bliss if man were only good, which now must work out a proportion of evil in consequence of the evil that is in man. *But* though offences must needs come, "woe to that man by whom the offence comes." However strong the necessity, in obedience to which evil is brought forth in the world, there is something that may be stronger than that, viz.; each individual's will: and therefore he who brings it, inherits the woe. Though it be an inevitable thing that there should be infidelity, if the Bible be true, and of God, then it must be a terrible thing to be an infidel; if our opinion about it be right, that it is God speaking to men, and by his word designing to accomplish their individual renovation and eternal happiness, and also the regeneration and happiness of the world, no man can persuade himself that any excuse will avail him for not heeding that. If it be a God's voice, there must be some marks of its Divinity, whatever the vehicle it may choose. If there be some thinker among men so vastly superior in the width, and height, and quality of his thought as to stand out from all others in boldest relief, then no matter into what dialect you translate his thought, its greatness will not fail to appear, and the authorship to be strongly probable. So, in the same way, if it be God speaking, no matter what the mode of His revelation, the Divine cannot fail to appear through the human with more or less of distinctness. And if this be so, then who shall acquit that man of guilt, who for any

assignable reason shall say it is not Divine. If there were no tremendous issue of incalculable moment to the man, dependant on the question, it is no light matter to run the hazard of one's own fallible and oft-perverted judgment doing this great thing, giving God the lie, or assigning his word to the invention of man. And when in addition to this, there is the probable risk of eternal misery as the result, it is only rational that a man should never yield himself up to infidelity but when impelled by the sternest and most irresistible necessity, by so immense a preponderance of doubt, and so overwhelming an accumulation of proof or probability on the side of disbelief, as to make belief an absurdity or impossibility.

And yet if one goes into circles where rejection of the Bible is rife now, or carefully examines the characteristics of the life of those who, in past times, have been the champions of disbelief, one finds, in scarce a solitary instance, any recognition of the solemn position in which every doubter places himself. You may find all imaginable sources for the phenomenon save this intense, sad, dogged pertinacity with which sincere and irresolvable doubts have pursued a man utterly beyond the pale of belief, out through the border land of unbelief, into that of positive absolute negation of what we call "The Truth." In one man it is to be attributed, without any lack of charity, to a philosophic whim or furor: the determination to account for every thing by laws which, in no respect, transcend the ordinary and the common. In another, it appears that his wit, having

pierced all the targets which the world presented, save this one—whose light arrows, feathered with fancy, and tipped with keenest, most polished and pointed sarcasm, had been stuck all over every thing else that was vulnerable to them—turned itself against religion, and found in it the most favourable world for his own glory of any thing that he had yet assailed. At another time, you find a set of men coming with footpad effrontery to demand of the world its Bible; and what hands think you are they which offer to snatch away the boon? Hands all polluted with all sorts of deeds of wickedness, their lips never free from ribaldry, their lives steeped in debauchery and vice. In another case, the unbelief is born of poetry, and the seer, accustomed to behold a spirit in every thing, comes by and bye to see every thing spirit, denies the outer world of fact, hates dogma, resolves all history, save that which is too recent to be so summarily treated, into the vulgar external of facts into which spirit has thrown itself; and having begun by loving mystery, ends by loving only mist, and by believing nothing save that there is nothing to be believed. And again, you will find an opposite extreme in the case of men without a spark of poetry, and scarce a glimmer of reason; who amuse themselves by arguing against a book of which they show themselves to be deplorably ignorant, and whose ostensible reason for being infidels is the fact, that there have been and still are, priests and tyrannies in the world; that a thing calling itself Christianity has been abroad in the world, the foe and oppressor of

man; giving themselves no pains whatever to inquire whether the thing had any right to the name. And then, to complete the category, you must add no small number of the noisy, bold, forward, conceited part of society, young men newly emancipated from educational and other control, who begin to show their gratitude for all the pains bestowed upon them by throwing it all away; who, because they are free, must take some outrageous mode of proving to themselves, and exhibiting to others, their freedom; who find an incipient instinctive desire to turn up their noses at other people, who would be full blown heroes all at once: and thinking that the more daring their outrage upon societies' ways and opinions, the more remarkable they shall become, they perch themselves upon the pinnacle of infidelity, and "sit like patience on a monument smiling at grief:" smiling with profoundest pitifulness of contempt upon the grief of those who have the misery to believe themselves happy children of God now, and on their way to a better home.

I say this completes the category; and yet where will you find in its whole length, that grand requisite for a true infidel which I have indicated, viz., an intensely sad, sorrowful conviction that this best morality, this brightest picture of man's future, this noblest idea of God and of man, this sufficient solace for all human woe, is not true, and must be surrendered to the clamorous hands of those doubts, which the reason persists in presenting, and which cannot be denied.

Further. It is not enough that a man should pre-

sent himself as a *sincere*, earnest, reluctant disbeliever in such a religion as Christianity; but we must also be convinced that he has the *moral qualification* to judge of such a matter. This is a point which seems to have been utterly overlooked or ignored by the majority of infidels; that much of the evidence on which the truth of Christianity rests, is of a moral and spiritual kind, and appeals to moral and spiritual faculty. Some of the great questions which lie like huge corner-stones underneath the whole framework of evidence, such as the necessity of a Divine revelation, the world's want of a Redeemer, the possibility of a sacrifice for sin, are questions with which logic cannot deal, to whose solution reason is incompetent, and whose probability and truth, or the contrary, will appear very variously to various minds, according to their moral capacity and spiritual affinities.

In demanding on behalf of religion that its assailants and critics should have their moral and spiritual faculties educated and capable of a judgment on the point, we are only asking what is recognised as an absolute necessity in other departments. A man must have an ear for music, and an educated, cultivated taste for it, if he is to appreciate the finest and most exquisite of human compositions. If you put before a raw clown some fine painting by Rembrandt, and by its side one of the coloured prints which usually adorn cottage walls, where the Apostle Peter, dressed in all the colours of the rainbow, is standing to be crowed at by a cock with a blue body and a green tail, he will prefer the latter

and think it the finest work of art. A man is not fit to be a judge of paintings, if he have not either some knowledge of the laws of colour, proportion, perspective and the like; or a natural taste, educated and refined by constant exercise upon the best productions. Or perhaps he ought to have both. In the same way it must be evident to all, that to judge correctly of such a thing as the truth of a religion, a man must have some religious affinities and some spiritual capacity. And if you find him a man whose whole habits both of thought and life are fleshly, then you may predict with certainty that the Bible and Christianity can never satisfy him.

The grand basis of all religion is the being of God. The existence of a great Creator and Parent of us all, but who must be to us, whilst in the present state of being, an unseen God. It may be that with our present faculties, any nearer approach to the vision or the consciousness of the presence of God is impossible; that as spirit is invisible to our bodily eye, and spiritual truths are inappreciable by a carnal mind, so our soul being at present so closely allied to a material organism, and so necessitated to act through and by means of it, we are unavoidably excluded from any nearer fellowship with God than that to which a strong and devout faith can lift us. Be that as it may, it is certain that no man has seen God at any time or can see Him. Equally impalpable things are those great laws of the Creator which express his will concerning us, and intimate our relationship to Him. The fact of our dependance on His power is a truth written indeed in the

world, but not upon its surface. It must be read by patient study of the laws and principles that work beneath, and so wondrously evolve for us their ever fresh and multiplying stores of bounteous supply. The rectitude of virtue and the turpitude of vice are not matters which you can always detect by the eye, or measure by palpable standards. If all men had their moral instincts undisturbed, and their consciences uninjured by passion, then these great truths would be found written there with unvarying clearness. But *there* is one of the conditions of which I speak. For a man to have faith in the religious obligation of virtue, he must have some affinity with virtue, some virtuous sensitiveness. He must either have the eye for its inherent beauty, or the ear to catch the deep utterance of its obligation on him, which rises from the moral history of the world, in the shape of fearful retributions, or merciful and bountiful rewards. Now a man who comes and tells us at the outset of any discussion, "I will not believe anything of which I cannot have ocular demonstration, or with which logic cannot deal as mechanically as it does with the fixed sciences," is simply telling us that he, by a volition of his own, not by any necessity of his nature, not by the action of any natural mental laws, but by a capricious volition of his own, has cut himself off from all religious faith. He has made it impossible. He is doing as absurd a thing as a man who should go into China or Turkey, or, if you could find it, some land where English currency is unknown, and the English tongue till then unheard, and should

say, "Now I will eat nothing here which I cannot buy with English shillings, and I will speak to no one who will not talk to me in English." He is demanding an absurdity and an impossibility; he dooms himself thereby to silence and starvation. Nations will not alter their currency, and learn English to talk to him and to please him. So the man who demands that all religious truth shall be made as palpable to him as the truths of science, is carrying the laws of his little physical world into God's great moral and spiritual world, and God will not alter His wise procedure to suit that man's caprice. No! he must get an ear to the suggestions of the universe; he must abase that proud eye which demands that everything shall be submitted to its scrutiny; he must be content to hear moral truths in moral tones, which appeal not to flesh but spirit, and then perhaps he will hear God in the universe, and find divine oracles within him which he will do well to heed. But if he go and take his stand as on some isolated peak of the wide universe, stripped of all religious faith, having wiped out every line of creed that was ever written there by the soft hand of conscience or the patient hand of early instruction; and standing there, his mind a religious blank and his heart a religious void, shall then dictate to that universe what he will accept; what he can and what he cannot receive; what light he will regard as true heavenly radiance, and what as mere earthly will-o'-the-wisp; what language shall be God's voice to him, and what delusive echoes from priests and fools beneath; and if, moreover, stan[redacted]here,

making his bold demands of God and the universe, he put on a stern, reluctant attitude, not like one willing to be convinced, but proud of his scepticism and suspicious about everything, it can be no wonder if the universe responds to him with the contempt of deathly silence, hides from him all her moral constellations, holds in her warm and fragrant breath of loving inspiration, and leaves him there to shiver and starve on his peak of presumption, and, if he will, to die. It is not to be expected that God will alter his wise and good laws respecting the religion of man, to suit the caprice of one or a hundred men, who go to God telling Him they doubt if he exists, but that if he do, He must prove it to them in a certain way.

LECTURE III.

"THE RISE AND PROGRESS OF CHRISTIANITY—THE ORIGIN OF THE TRINITY—THE DARK AGES AND THE DAWN OF MENTAL LIGHT."

THE present lecture is in reply to Mr. Shackleton's first lecture, which, as you are aware, was the second of a course recently delivered in this place. That lecture was advertised to be on "the rise and progress of Christianity—the origin of the Trinity—the dark ages and the dawn of mental light." The lecturer, however, confined his attention almost exclusively to the early history of Christianity. The essential falsehood with which that lecture abounds compels me to adopt a similar course; inasmuch as I am expected to answer him, and I cannot do so with any degree of justice to the Christian cause unless I reply to his statements and reasoning very much in detail; and if I do that, even an ordinary regard to your time and patience will forbid me to do more than glance at the second and third topics announced.

Coming forward as an Atheist in support of Atheism, it was natural that the lecture of my opponent

should display his preferences. Hence they appear in some such form as this: Arianism before Athanasianism; Deism before Arianism; but above all, Atheism. Yet he is not always consistent with himself. For while Atheism is his motto and aim, the way in which he treats the witnesses whom he brings into court, would almost lead to the conclusion that a man's character depends on his testimony, and not his testimony on his character. An honest man becomes suspicious, and a man of doubtful character a credible witness, according as the evidence he gives sustains or damages the cause of Atheism.

It is, doubtless, difficult to be thoroughly impartial when a man is zealously anxious in the advocacy of a cause, to which he is strongly attached either from party prejudice or religious affection. Still, if he be honest in his search after truth, and conscientious in estimating the facts and arguments for and against himself, he will not grievously transgress, so far at least as consciousness and the knowledge of his subject extend. Whether I shall succeed in carrying out my own notions on this point remains to be seen. I shall certainly endeavour to do so; and shall be most willing to be corrected, if in the course of the lecture anything should appear wrong or unfair.

The course adopted by my opponent in his lecture, was meant to show, that the Jews were too insignificant a people to have given Christianity a historical origin—that the events of Christ's history were incredible and absurd—and that such were the facilities for communicating knowledge throughout the Roman Empire, that if our Lord Jesus Christ had lived and

founded our holy religion at the time when we believe he did, intelligence of the facts of his life and of his doctrine and disciples, must have been so soon and so widely communicated, as to have commanded the attention of the great, as well as the pens of historians and poets. And because Christianity did not achieve for itself this empirical success, which he asserts to have been necessary in order to attest the existence of Christ and the rise of Christianity from him, he boldly denies the truth of both these facts. Scorning all Christian testimony in support of the historical existence of Christ, and of the rise of Christianity from him, he proceeds to set aside as false, or invalidate as doubtful, all Jewish and Roman testimony in their favour. Having, as he supposes, thus cut away the historical basis from Christ and Christianity, he quietly goes on to show how it is that there have been so many believers in Christianity for so many ages, and that Christianity has a history nearly as old as that of England. This he does by telling us, on his own authority, that three different sets of philosphers, or quasi philosophers, formed a partnership of opinions and creeds in which they all agreed, and that by throwing these into a kind of joint stock, as common capital, they traded upon it, and kept for their private use the opinions in which they differed. But after all this charlatanry, he found that a joint stock of common opinions did not make Christianity. It wanted the name, as indeed it wanted the nature; but having assigned it a false nature, he looked out for a false source for its name, and that, he says, he discovered in heathenism, in

which, notwithstanding his joint stock affair, he asserts, that Christianity had both its rise and resemblance.

We will follow my opponent in his course, and at once consider the first position which he assumes against the historical existence of Christ as the author of Christianity. It is that the Jews were too insignificant a people to give birth to such a person as Christ, and to such a system as that of his religion; and that they were so few, mean and historically unimportant, that the Bible account of them must be false; and if it be false in its history of the Jews, its testimony to Christ must be *a fortiori* questionable and invalid. This Old Testament is a sore stumbling block in the way of sceptics; and because they cannot disprove its genuineness, they falsify its narrative, and then reflect the shadow of their own falsehood on its veracity.

In the first place, my opponent does this by insinuating that the historical value of the Pentateuch is doubtful; because Moses, who is said to be its author, knew of no writing materials but stone. He says, "Until the invention of what is called the Egyptian papyrus, there were very few writing materials; indeed, formerly there was no material on which men could write but stone; and so large a book as the five books of Moses to have been written on stone—that being the only article used in Moses' time—would have taken as much stone as would have built a large street. That would have been a very large book, depend upon it." This last remark was intended to be smart, without much room for

smartness. The Egyptian papyrus is not only called by that name, but is the thing itself. It was not so much invented as discovered, since it grew naturally as a reed or sedgy plant on the marshy borders of the Nile, and was prepared as a writing material simply by attaching together several of the skins of its large lanceolate leaves with the water of the Nile. And, for anything my opponent's reading will enable him to prove to the contrary, it was used by the Egyptians before the birth of Moses, who carried the knowledge and use of it with him from Egypt to the banks of the Jordan, where it also grows naturally. And if he will refer to Deut. xxxi. 1—13, he will find that Moses had written all God's law in a form so convenient as to hand it over to the priests and elders to be preserved and read to the people every seven years; and v. 24—7, it is expressly said to have been written in a *book*, which is commanded to be kept in the ark, where it was found, and out of which it was taken and read to the people in the reign of Josiah. (2 Chron. xxxiv, 14.) The command given in Deut. xxvii, 1—4, and fulfilled in Joshua viii, 32, to escarp a rock, give it a smooth surface, and write on it the law, was intended to give the people a stationary and permanent copy of the law in a rock-inscription, which should be always open to public inspection. That this was not an unusual mode of recording public laws and historical events among the Shemitic nations, is evident from the many ancient rock inscriptions which remain in various eastern nations to this day. But my opponent ought to have known, that as early as the

days of Abraham tablets of rolled lead were used for written records among the tribes of Arabia; and especially that Pliny, in his natural history, proves that paper made from the papyrus, as above described, was in general use before the Trojan war. Nor to my own mind does it appear very doubtful, that long before this mode of preparing the papyrus was adopted for the sake of flexibility, it was used in a still more natural state, as the Hindoos use the compressed leaves of the flags of the Ganges and other rivers, on which they write separately, and make them into a book by laying a number one on another, and fastening them together by a string passed through a hole at one end of them. The first processes of art are generally the most simple.

My opponent also questions the antiquity of the Jewish nation, and therefore, the Old Testament history of it, because the Jews are not mentioned in any author until after the Babylonish captivity. His language is :—"We have no direct history, with the exception of the Bible, on which we can rely with regard to the Jews ; for before the time of the Babylonish captivity, so far as my reading informs me, there was no account of them by any nation extant, so far as I have read. The Greeks and the Phœnicians, who lived close to Jerusalem, did not know that such a people were in existence. They do not mention them at all before the time of the Babylonish captivity." All this laborious repetition in two sentences is intended to be impressive, and to produce the conviction, that the Jews were so feeble and insignificant a people, as to be unknown to their

immediate neighbours. But whether they were feeble or mighty, known or unknown to other nations, so long as they had an existence, they were a people; and notwithstanding their asserted insignificance, Christ and Christianity might have issued from them, just as the majestic oak arises from the buried acorn. But to look at my opponent's language a little more closely. The Jews were an insignificant people, because the Phœnician history does not notice them before the Babylonish captivity. Alas! for him, the Phœnician history notices them neither before nor after that event, for this simple reason, that there is no Phenician history extant. He also asserts, that the Jews were an insignificant people, because Grecian history does not mention them before the Babylonish captivity. It would be strange if it did. The return of the Jews from that captivity was completed B. C. 530, and Herodotus the father of profane history, was not *born* till eighty-one years afterwards. And what is worse still for my opponent's contradictory position, the Greeks knew nothing of Judea until the conquest of Alexander the Great, one hundred and eighty years after that event; that is, only two hundred and ninety six years before Christ. But if the want of notice in Greek historians is to reduce a nation to insignificance, or to consign it to annihilation, then China was insignificant or unknown, for the Greeks knew nothing of it, until the same conquering career of Alexander brought it to their knowledge. And this mode of argument tells still more powerfully against the fabulous antiquity of India, out of which my opponent seeks to

make a crushing argument against a historical Christianity as originated by Christ.

But what are we to think of a man who comes forward as an intelligent advocate of truth, and who, on such grounds, immolates the greatness of the Jews,—says, the Bible exaggerates their importance; and asserts that the war-cry—"To your tents, Oh Israel!" is Bible proof, that the Jews were a nation of mere wandering vagabonds, an illiterate set of men, who wandered from place to place, and lived in tents:—as if the Bible, which is true when it exhibits their weakness, may not also be true when it describes their strength. What are we to think of a man who talks and argues thus, after telling us twice in two sentences about his reading on a certain subject, in certain books, when no such books exist; and when the very nations, whose history, he says, is silent about the Jews, owe all their early authentic history that remains, to the Jews and the Bible? Did he, or did he not know what he was saying? I leave him to answer.

My opponent's next argument is, that the Jews were a mean spirited, mindless set of men. He thus libels them. "Among the long list of ancient worthies, who have lighted up posterity by the brightness of their intellect, we can scarcely lay our hand on a single Jew in the entire list,—we can scarcely point to one thing of importance, which the Jews have done in the world. All the great deeds of antiquity have been done by heathen nations, who were said to be under the curse of God."

In considering these assertions it must be remem-

bered, that the Jews had their history before most other nations had a historical existence, and that their history closes soon after that of those nations has credibly begun; so that many of their sayings and doings by which they benefitted the world or distinguished themselves, must have been lost in their antiquity. Besides which, their history is rather theocratic than political; and by that, its chief feature, it precludes the narration of much respecting their simply national doings, which makes a large portion of the staple history of other nations. But what are the mighty deeds of ancient nations in which they excel the Jews? Are they deeds of war? I presume my opponent does not mean anything so bloody, for he detests war, and is more than angry that men bearing the Christian name should ever enter the battle-field. But even as to patriotic wars, which are the most tolerable, the Jews, considering their strength and numbers, will bear a comparison with any nation of antiquity; as will Joshua, David, the Maccabees, and others, bear comparison with its heroes. And as to the statesmen of antiquity, which nation has produced any who can equal Joseph and Daniel for comprehensiveness, philanthropy, decision, energy and unfaltering integrity? But if the great deeds of antiquity are not associated with martial achievements and statesman-like qualities, are they displayed in history? If they are, then surely from Moses to Josephus, no nation ever possessed an entire class of historians so natural, true and impartial, as did the Jews. Or is it in the antiquity of their histories that other

nations surpass the Jews? I trow not; for the surrounding nations have no authentic early history until the Jewish nation begins to decline, while that of the Jews runs back to creation, with all the marks of simplicity, honesty, accuracy and discrimination, on its hoary brow. And yet in all that history it lacked great, eminent and useful men! Is it in heraldry, the associate of history, that the Jews are excelled? What noble, nay, what monarch would not be proud to trace his ancestry to Abram of Ur; and to emblazon on his escutcheon, in chief or quarterly, any device or motto so ancient as those which decked and distinguished the banners of the twelve tribes? If it is not in any of these, that the nations of antiquity surpassed the Jews in great deeds, is it in legislation and morals? If so, Greece and Rome do but indefinitely approach, and cannot reach the Jews. Their laws and morals had the form and outward power, but they wanted, and failed because they wanted, the divine sanction—the spirtual motive. And here especially the Jews had the advantage of the Greeks. The blessings of equal government were theirs, but Greece had them not. While the masses of the Greek nation were predial slaves by law, the Hebrews were forbidden by their religion to use the services of their brethren unless by hire or special contract. And even their slaves made in war were required, by the same solemn authority, to be treated with the strictest justice and humanity; while the slave escaping from his master became free as soon as he trod on Hebrew ground. But if the great deeds of antiquity are not connected with

such insignificant things as political freedom, social security and equality before the law, are they found in proficiency in arts and sciences? As an agricultural people the Jews were not wanting in the ordinary arts which benefit and adorn society, including among others, carvers and engravers in silver and gold. And though in their early history as a distinct people, they may not have equalled the more early settled nations of Egypt and Tyre in some of the arts, yet if their earliest national history in the wilderness be compared with the history of the Greeks before the Persian war, the Jews must have far excelled them: as witness the tabernacle against the productions of Greek art before that war, which Niebuhr, judging from their remains, pronounces to have been "altogether barbarous." And after that period, the productions of Greece in architecture—the art in which she most excelled except statuary—will not give her the superiority over the Jews, so far as we are acquainted with their various public buildings. Those buildings, judging from the knowledge of them which remain doubtless surpassed the remaining specimens of Egyptian and Indian architecture, the state of many of which show them to have been finished in the rough; and in many cases they are not true to line and rule. But where among all the peoples of antiquity was found a temple like the temple at Jerusalem, which was built of vast blocks of white marble, hewn and polished? Unequalled and unrivalled in all its grandeur, magnificence and wondrousness, it stood "like a palace built for God."

In the art of statuary the Greeks did surpass the Jews; but that was an art discouraged by the Hebrew religion. In poetry, however, the Greeks do not at all equal the Jews. What nation ever had poetry so true to nature, so deep in feeling, so affluent in imagination, so sublime in sentiment, so awful and yet so tender, so vast and yet so minute, so subduing and yet so elevating, as that of the Jews? And where can any nation show an epic so beautiful and and so inartificial as those of Job and Esther, or a pastoral so natural, because so truthful, as that of Ruth? What ancient poet can compare with Isaiah's enraptured, majestic and soaring strains? or with the weeping, bleeding and intensely patriotic effusions of Jeremiah? or with the deep, vehement, indignant, tragical, and terrifically grand and awful utterances of Ezekiel? And as to the Psalms, those odes for rich and poor, the joyous and the sorrowing, in the language of Bishop Horne, "The fairest productions of human wit, after a few perusals, like gathered flowers, wither in our hands and lose their fragrancy; but these unfading plants of paradise become, as we are accustomed to them, still more and more beautiful; their bloom appears to be daily heightened; fresh odours are emitted, and new sweets are extracted from them. He who hath once tasted their excellencies, will desire to taste them yet again; and he who tastes them oftenest will relish them best."

But Greece, with all her wars and legislation, her poetry and slavery, her architecture and statuary; with all her heroes, statesmen, poets and artists,

wanted that purest, richest and best development of human intelligence, the eye, the taste, the habitual admiration of nature. As a nation she exhausted her knowledge and love of nature in architecture and statuary, especially in the latter. But the Jew was at home in the loving contemplation of the gentle stream and the foaming cataract, amidst the flowery mead, the jocund plain, the frowning crag, and the aspiring hill, amidst the forest and the glade, amidst the calm serenities of an unclouded sky, and the angry darkness and awful fury of the storm. His taste was more expansive, his imagination more gorgeous, and his whole temperament was universally truer to nature than that of Greek or Roman. And why? Not for any want that either experienced of nature's sublimities and beauties, but because they were not what the Jew was, the true child of nature's own simplicity and freedom.

So far, therefore, as the want of antiquity, importance and mind are concerned, I think that atheists gain no advantage, as against the history of Christ and Christianity, in connection with the Jews. Indeed, if there were nothing else to show that they were an important historical people, the various seiges which they sustained in their cities, especially Jerusalem, from Sennacherib, Nebuchadnezzar, Pompey, Antiochus, Ptolemy, son of Lagus, Herod and Sosius, and from the Romans under Vespasian and Titus, are sufficient to show it. And this last, which was continued so long, and which was resisted with the most desperate and almost superhuman valour, was only the con-

clusion of many sieges and engagements throughout their country, which secured its subjection and overthrow.

In the second place, my opponent proceeds to attempt the invalidation of the history of Christ's life and authorship of Christianity, by treating the events of his advent and history as improbable, incredible and absurd.

He says the magi who came to Christ "were the priests of the sun," "of Persia or Egypt, or some of them," and that they did not believe in Christ. I had always thought that the magi were sages from the east; from Arabia, or some part of the Parthian kingdom; and that they believed themselves to have been coming to some important personage, whether guided by tradition, or by a theory of their own; and that they accordingly brought him a present of such things as were prized in their own country. But my opponent asserts, that the magi "neither believed the Jewish religion, nor the report of the prophets" concerning Christ. And assuming, without the slightest show of evidence, that they were priests of a heathen temple, he asserts, that they would not come "to seek out and verify the predictions of Jewish prophets."

To this it might be briefly replied;—they were sages and not priests; they came, not to believe the Jewish religion but to worship Christ—nor did they come to verify Jewish prophecy, but to exult in an event which was its fulfilment—the advent of Christ—the spiritual king of his own Israel; whose coming, though its nature and mode were misunderstood,

Josephus, and after him, Tacitus and Suetonius say, was generally expected. But my opponent's object is, though expressed in a maze of words, to assert and to persuade others to believe, that it is absurd to suppose, that a Gentile should worship a Jewish Christ. How then does it happen, that since the first ages of Christianity, our Lord's followers have all been Gentiles, and who, or whose ancestors, were all previously idolaters?

My opponent also puts the narrative of the slaughter of the infants in the same category as the worship of the magi. He says, "Herod had no occasion to fear a king of the Jews being born, for he himself was not a king, but merely as I said before, the lord lieutenant of the place; who was appointed and could be discharged at any moment; and, therefore, the idea of a person being born king of the Jews, could not in the least interfere with him. Herod had no power whatever to go about killing any one's child; he durst not even put criminals to death without a regular trial, much less send armed bands to murder little children. He would immediately have been called to account; the whole Roman Empire would have been up in arms against such an audacious monster. No such thing did, or could take place during the better part of the Roman Government, by any man who enjoyed a situation of that description." It so happens, whether under the better or worse part of the Roman Government, that such a thing both could, and did take place. For Herod was a king, and was made such by the Roman Senate at the request of Anthony. And

after the battle of Actium, Augustus confirmed him in his dignity. He also exercised the power of life and death. He caused the death of Aristobulus the brother, and Hyrcanus the venerable grandfather of his wife, the famous Mariamme. He then slew her, and then Alexander and Aristobulus the two sons she had borne him. And though Anthony called him to account for drowning his brother-in-law, a man of princely rank, he was brought over to his side by bribery. And although he thus killed his wife and sons, no part of the Roman Empire rose in arms against him; only when Augustus heard that he had slain his sons, he said, "it is better to be Herod's hog than his son." When a man thus murders his own family, of royal rank and princely descent, and that with impunity, it is not likely, that his cruelty would be restrained by trifling considerations. On the contrary, he was so cruel and fearfully jealous, that he began the work of murder with a high hand before he became king. And that he might die as he had lived, he summoned the chief Jews to Jericho, and having secured them in the circus, he ordered his sister Salome to have them massacred when he died, that every great family might weep for him. Happily the savage order was not executed; though it evinced Herod's possession of more power and cruelty than was necessary for the murder of the innocents.

Having disposed of these circumstances attending Christ's birth in so cavalier a manner, and hoping that others will think as little of all the rest, as he does of those, he goes on to dispose of the miracles

of Christ with equal ease and nonchalance. Speaking of the weakminded believers in Mormonism, he asserts, that the same took place "at the time Christ was working his miracles. There were only a few ignorant fanatics running after him, according to the account." Thus my opponent has the assurance to liken Christ's miracles to those of Mormonism. Now there is not only this trifling difference between them, that Christ's were well known and established, while those of Mormonism lack even the semblance of authenticity; but there is also this further difference, that Christ wrought his miracles when he proclaimed his doctrines, as a corroborative evidence of their truth, and not years after their publication, as is the case with the pretended miracles of Mormonism. Albeit, in what he has said, my opponent has unintentionally acknowledged, that Christ did live and work miracles. I thank him for admitting the existence of Christ as a historical personage; and did I suppose, that he uttered this fact deliberately, it so completely upsets all his atheism, that I might congratulate him on his conversion to Christianity, and sit down. But I suspect it was an old truth which is now and then troublesome, and which in the confusion of his thoughts took the opportunity of speaking out, as a criminal condemned but not dead. But when he states, that the account, that is the gospel narrative, says, that only a few "ignorant fanatics" ran after Christ; and on that basis intends to assert, that Christ's miracles are only equal to the pretended miracles of Mormonism, whether in

character or evidence, I cannot resist quoting his own language against him: "I say there is not a man in England but has a little insanity of one description or another." And I might add, without much invasion of truth or charity; verily, my opponent, much ignorance doth make thee mad!

But still he attempts to throw discredit on Christ's miracles in the following disjointed sentence: "If such a thing had taken place as a man, or a God if you will, making his appearance in any country, and going abroad performing all these miraculous things; the very heavens being shut up, and darkness overspreading the earth at his crucifixion, there was not a single man, who lived in all Judea that would not have been converted to Christianity; not one." So says my opponent.

Suffice it to say, that if moral beings are not influenced by moral means, extraordinary events, which produce wonder or fear, may excite and alarm, but they will effect no change of opinion nor reformation of manners. The teachings of the Jewish prophets were attested by miraculous credentials, yet in our Lord's day the Jews as a people had long disregarded them. The want of a disposition to seek their own inward good, in the way of obedience to the divine oracles, made them impervious to all moral considerations. There is in human nature a principle which necessitates a moral submissiveness of mind, preparatory to the reception of divine truth and its superhuman attestation; and our Lord brings it out with great force when he says, "If they hear not Moses and the prophets,

neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead." And as the event proved, his own resurrection produced no moral renovation in that class, among whom he could not previously do many mighty works "because of their unbelief." The same principle is developed on lower ground, in all the murders which are so cruelly and so frequently committed on every hand. Conscience, natural instinct and the law of the land, all join with one voice to proclaim to man his duty, "thou shall not kill." And the threatening of death, and the certainty of execution, furnish a fearful emphasis to the voice of duty. But neither the voice of duty, nor that of threatening, nor the fear of an ignominous death; no, nor the sight of repeated executions for murder, are sufficient to prevent the assassin from sacrificing his own life to the gratification of an embruted cruelty. And why? because a mind bent on its own vicious purposes remains insensate under the dictates of duty and the appeals of terror; and on the same principle, because the Jews had determined to reject the moral teaching of the Gospel, they remained unaffected by its miraculous confirmation.

Having seen how summarily my opponent attempts to get rid of the facts of our Lord's personal life, let us go on to the next branch of the discusssion, in which he further attempts to get rid of Christ's life and authorship of the Gospels by roundly asserting, that they could not have been written by the Evangelists, because they were *Jews*. His language is: "There are four gospels, and we are told, that

they were written by the immediate disciples of Christ. There is not now, and never was a single copy, which can be positively proved to have been written in any other language than the Greek. If you can imagine four illiterate fishermen, who spoke this Syriac language at the time, writing four books in the Greek language, you have a greater capacity for swallowing than I have. I cannot imagine such a thing." He then adds, what he had said in the earlier part of his lecture, "the very name they gave to Christ is of Greek origin; it is not a Hebrew word." I cannot help thinking, that the repetition of this piece of empty intelligence, in this place and mode, displays a little more petulant anxiety to be believed, combined with a fear of not succeeding, than comports with a calm inquiry after truth. But to pass that by; it is of little consequence how dull my opponent's imagination may be or how narrow his swallow, the question is, what is the truth? In answering it we remark—

There is nothing wonderful in a man's being able to write and speak in another language besides his own; especially where circumstances make it desirable or advantageous for him to do so. The Welsh who have frequent intercourse with the English speak both Welsh and English, having acquired the latter for purposes of trade, &c. So also the Highlanders, including the *fishermen*, all round the north of Scotland, speak the Gaelic among themselves; and also speak and write the English when it is their interest to do so. And to this day in travelling on the continent, you must speak French as the current

language of intercourse, or submit to inconvenience or privation. Now the Roman empire consisted of many nations, to some of which, from their previous subjection to the Greek monarchy, as well as from the preference it had achieved for itself as a medium of international communication, the Greek had become the language of politeness and commerce; so that while speaking their own language, they also spoke and wrote the Greek for purposes of trade and general communication. Manetho and Josephus are two striking instances of persons complying with this custom. Manetho, who was born B.C. 261, was an Egyptian, to whom the Egyptian language was native; yet in writing his history of Egypt he used the Greek, with which he was acquainted, as the language of international intercourse. Hence the Evangelists exhibited nothing wonderful in their writing in the Greek language, which they did for the sake of circulating the gospel. That this was their object can be little doubted, when history points to the fact that Matthew, who wrote before the other evangelists, first wrote his gospel in the Hebrew, and then wrote it again in Greek, that it might be more extensively circulated. Besides which, it must have often happened that our Lord's disciples as well as the other inhabitants of Judea, were compelled to speak and write in Greek, or almost go out of the world, since that language "was spread over all Palestine. The Jewish coast, on the Mediterranean, was occupied by cities, either wholly or half Greek. On the eastern border of the land, from the Arnon upwards, towards the north, the

cities were Greek; and towards the south, in possession of the Greeks. Several cities of Judea and Galilee were either entirely, or at least half, peopled by Greeks."

The peculiar character of the Greek in which the gospels are written, also establishes their claim to genuineness. It is the Greek of men thinking and speaking in the Syro-Chaldaic language, that is the Hebrew, as it existed in the time of Christ. It is the Greek clothing Jewish thoughts, and is hence called Hebraistic Greek. Had it been pure classic Greek like that of Demosthenes or Zenophon, the authenticity of the Gospels, as written by the evangelists, could not have been defended without a miracle. Or had it equalled the Greek of Josephus or Philo, who used it in a scholarly, though not classical manner, it might have subjected the authorship of the Gospels by the evangelists to grave suspicion. But it is the Greek of Jewish men living, thinking, talking and acting among the people; and is just such a style of Greek as was written in Judea in the first century, and could not have been written at all subsequently, unless by a few individuals who might have survived that age. For while it is the Hebrew of the restoration, it has in it a few Persian and Syriac ideas and phrases, the natural result of that intercourse which the Jews had with those nations, to both of which they were for a time subject. After the destruction of Jerusalem, A.D. 70, the generation who spoke and wrote in this Hebrew-Greek style, would gradually die out, and their descendants would as gradually receive various modifi-

cations of their Greek, which could not readily be confounded with that spoken before the close of the first century; inasmuch as it would want those oriental turns of thought and phraseology, which distinguish the gospels. And we are quite certain that the gospels could not have been forged and published by any men who were not natives of Judea in the first century; because no other country could have produced the peculiar dialect in which they are written. Nor could they have been forged in the second century, since the Jews who were left in Palestine would have indignantly exposed and rejected them. Nor would they have met with more ceremonious treatment from the Nazarenes and Ebionites, the Jewish Christians who lived there in the early part of the second century, and who, separating from the true Christians, who rejected Moses to follow only Christ, adopted the gospel of Matthew in a corrupt form, because it contained, as they supposed, more of the Jewish element than the rest. But their choice of one gospel because of its Hebrew element, and their rejection of the others because of their more exclusively Christian element, shows that they were acquainted with them all, and that they must all have been previously published as gospels of Christ. Here then are four gospels written, not by four fishermen as my opponent ignorantly says, but by a farmer of taxes, a reputed painter, a physician, and a fisherman, whose devout and lovely spirit calls for our emulation, while his philosophical and truthful mind commands our reverence. Here they are, written with just

that variety of language among themselves, which we might expect to find among four men of different mental structure, and moving in different spheres of life not widely removed from one another. Here they are written too in a dialect of the Greek which confines them to the first century; and to remove the date of their publication from that period, and their authorship from Palestinian Jews, will require more learning and logic, than I have yet seen an atheist bring to bear on this subject.

But my opponent further objects, on this part of the subject, that the gospels could not have been written by the persons whose names they bear, because they were unknown for three hundred years after the time when they are said to have been written. Allowing this to be true, which it is not, it is insufficient of itself to damage their claim to genuineness. For if non-publication as a collected whole, which is what he means, for a certain number of years after the reputed date of any literary production, is enough to prove it surreptitious, we have in that case no poems of Homer; and those which pass under his name as that of their author, were not written by him, since Cicero informs us, that they were first collected by Pisistratus, the Athenian tyrant, between three and four hundred years after they were written. Will my opponent come forward and challenge the genuineness of the Iliad and Odyssey on this ground? If not, let him not make it a ground on which to challenge the genuineness of the gospels.

My opponent's next argument against the his-

torical existence of Christ and his authorship of Christianity, is based on the assertion that Christ's doctrines were not generally known and embraced by Roman emperors, statesmen, courtiers, historians and people. The pith of his argument, built on this foundation, is, that the state of the Roman empire and the facilities for communication between the capital and the provinces were such at the beginning of our era, that, if Christ and Christianity had existed, according to our belief, they must have been known, and if known generally believed.

It is to be regretted that my opponent does not attempt to prove that the knowledge of truth and goodness must secure their practical adoption. It may be presumed that he would have done so if he could, because to have done that would have been virtually to have established his antichristian presumption. It is also to be regretted, that all he gives us on the state of the Roman world at the time referred to, beyond what everybody knows, is mere balderdash. He says, "We," that is he and his co-opinionists, for we have been better taught from our childhood—"We are too much accustomed to imagine that people who lived so long ago as two thousand years, were a set of very ignorant, barbarous individuals." And again he says, "We have been taught from our very infancy to consider all the Gentile world as a set of men scarcely fit to be allowed to run loose." All that can be said in reply to such statements as these is, that my opponent and his friends are much to be pitied that

chance either allowed or caused them to be born to so much ignorance and historical deception. Albeit, he intended to insinuate an untruth, viz., that Christians keep their children in ignorance of the highly civilized state of the Roman world, lest they should question the historical truth of Christianity, because it was not at once and everywhere honoured with state and popular adoption; which insinuation is as malicious as it is untrue.

Let me assure my opponent that we know more of the state of the Roman world at the birth of Christ than he does, and yet are at no loss to account for the nonrecognition of Christianity by states and peoples, especially the former. Let atheists tell us how it was likely to obtain from the court and courtiers, or from the historians of imperial Rome, an immediate recognition, seeing that, for more than a century, Christianity was believed by them to be a form of Judaism, which was always to them a theme of abhorrence and ridicule, because its theism and ceremonial isolated them from all nationalities but their own. Besides which, the early Christians were mostly found among the poor and trading classes—just the very classes most distasteful to a commerce-hating people like the Romans.

But supposing, as we know, that tidings of them as a new Jewish sect were carried along the Roman highways, with all the speed of imperial couriers, the intelligence thus conveyed might be forwarded only to hinder and not to promote the propagation and objects of Christianity. It is a little surprising that my opponent did not remember that when, so

recently as the year 1848, eight hundred atheists, armed to the teeth for red republican propagandism, took the rail at Paris for Brussels, the French Chamber telegraphed their movements and objects to the Belgian government, who arrested them all on their arrival that they might not propagate their revolutionary sentiments in that country. Had he thought of this, he would have seen that republican France, with her high state of civilization and no great amount of Christianity to trouble her, could use the last greatest achievement of science for her own purposes and bend the lightning to restrain and repress new dogmas and new parties. And good as atheism is in my opponent's estimation, my opponent knows full well that tidings of its doings were conveyed along royal highways, with all the modern facilities for communication, but it was not adopted. And we shall hereafter see that tidings of Christianity did reach Rome, and that by the imperial mode of communicating governmental dispatches, so that it was known though not believed.

But my opponent finding that, somehow or other, both Christ and Christianity are very inconveniently noticed by Josephus and several Roman historians, and being afraid that their testimony in favour of their historical existence will invalidate his assertions to the contrary, he determines, as a fifth step, to prove that all such notices are interpolations.

To begin with Josephus. The passage containing his testimony to Christ, is as follows:—"Now there was about this time Jesus, a wise man, if it be law-

ful to call him a man; for he performed many wonderful works. He was a teacher of such men as received the truth with pleasure. He drew over to him many of the Jews, and also many of the Gentiles. This was the Christ. And when Pilate, at the instigation of the principal men among us, had condemned him to the cross, those who had loved him from the first, did not cease to adhere to him. For he appeared to them alive again, on the third day; the divine prophets having foretold these, and ten thousand other wonderful things concerning him. And the tribe [or sect], of Christians, so named from him, subsists at this day."

My opponent objects to the genuineness of this testimony, because it is first found in Eusebius, whom he calls a forger; and says that, among other writers whom he names, Jortin allows that he was such; and that it was thus unknown until four hundred years after Christ's death. In reply I would observe, that there is not the slightest proof that it was forged by Eusebius. Of the writers named by my opponent, as charging Eusebius with literary dishonesty, Jortin is the only one whose works I possess; but I cannot find the place in which he calls Eusebius a forger. I do, however, find a place, in which he says, that the *Præparatio* and the *Demonstratio Evangelica* of Eusebius are, like the rest of his works, useful and *valuable* treatises, vol ii. 255. Besides being mentioned by Eusebius, the passage is found in all the known manuscript copies of Josephus, including a *Hebrew* translation in the Vatican Library, and an Arabic version in the hands

of the Maronites of Mount Lebanon. Moreover, two books after that in which this passage occurs, Josephus has another respecting James, our Lord's brother, the genuineness and authenticity of which have never been suspected; and which an impartial mind cannot read without concluding, that Josephus had previously named Christ, or else, that the external history of Christ, as a public character, was so well known, that he might refer to him, in order to make a comparatively private individual better known, by stating what was his connection with Christ; although of the two convictions the former is the more natural. The following is the passage:—"Ananus assembled the Jewish Sanhedrim, and brought before it *James* the brother of Jesus who is called Christ, with some others, whom he delivered over to be stoned as breakers of the law." As Josephus lived when this unlawful condemnation was pronounced, we have his testimony to the general notoriety of Christ as a public character, and that within a comparatively short time after his death. But if Eusebius had been the first to notice this passage, it could not have been more than *three*, instead of *four* hundred years after Christ's death that he quoted it, as he died, A. D. 340.

As to the old objections about its place and style which my opponent reproduces, it is enough to say, that many men of competent learning and judgment contend, that it very naturally fills the place which it occupies, and that its style is as like Josephus's, as that of any man can be in two successive sentences of his pen. My opponent's assertion, "that Photius

wrote a critique of three articles on Josephus without mentioning this passage," contains nothing wonderful or staggering. The object of Photius in reviewing Josephus was not the adduction of Christian evidences, but historical and literary criticism; and the brevity with which he wrote was inconsistent with minute and special citations of isolated statements of fact, not affecting the general character of his works, since he occupies but six volumes with a critical examination of 280 works by different authors. But we have my opponent's favourite argument, that to know Christianity is to receive it, applied to Josephus, as well as to others, in the form that, if Josephus wrote this passage, he must have believed in Christ. It shows that he knows but little of the operations of mind, if he supposes, that historical faith will necessarily produce moral results. The devils believe, but they tremble. And Rousseau, who spoke in the highest terms of Christ in one of his works, in that same work, as well as in others, bitterly inveighs against Christianity.

As a last remark on this passage of Josephus, it may be observed, that when he said this was the Christ, or the same was Christ, he did but complete Christ's distinctive name, so as to make it clear of whom he was speaking. That this is the true view of the words is more than probable from the other passage already cited, in which he says, that James was the brother of Jesus, who was *called* Christ. As to the supposition, that Josephus must have thought him a divine being, from his saying, on account of the reports he had heard of his

miracles, "if it be lawful to call him a man,"—it may be much more forcibly retorted, that Thomas Paine was a devoted believer in a special providence, because, having so narrowly escaped the guillotine to which Robespierre had doomed him, in joy and wonder at his escape, he said thus, "it happened, if *happening* is a proper word." But it would shock my opponent's sensibilities, if I were to tell him, that Thomas Paine was a believer in a particular providence.

The next person whose testimony my opponent impugns, is that of Pliny the younger, governor of Bithynia, who, not liking to put Christians to death simply for their religion, wrote to Trajan for instructions how to proceed; and in his letter describes the Christians as followers of Christ, and among other things says that, "they sing among themselves alternately, a hymn to Christ as God." My opponent says that "all the German literati" "disown the passage in Pliny." To which I simply reply, that they all do not; and that those who do, are like himself, disbelievers in the historical life and authorship of Christ, and who in their anxiety to get rid of them, violate all the laws of legitimate criticism. Of all these literati he, however, names only one, Dr. J. A. Selmes of Leipsic. From him my opponent borrows the false assertion, that the Christians in Pliny's days did not believe in Christ as God, and that, therefore, they could not worship him as such; and this, he says, any man acquainted with history knows. As my opponent thus claims *for himself* an acquaintance with history, and I am

only a tyro in that direction, it becomes me very respectfully to refer him to the writings of the "Apostolical Fathers," for the reproof of his own rashness. As a corroborative proof of the genuineness of this letter of Pliny, those who, like my opponent, are acquainted with history, will not only remember, that it led Trajan to forbid the Christians to be sought after; but also that, if they were *publicly* accused, his rescript still left them obnoxious to capital punishment. In consequence of this, and of its forbidding delation, many of the Romans in the reign of Adrian, Trajan's successor, feeling as hostile as ever to the Christians, but not liking to incur the opprobrium of common informers, adopted certain surreptitious means of bringing them to judicial notice, and that with so much success, as to lead to so many barbarous executions, that Serenus Granianus sought a further security for the life of men, whose only crime was their religion. This security was accorded and was publicly proclaimed by a decree of Adrian to Minutius Fundanus, successor to Serenus, because he himself was on the eve of retiring from office when he made his benevolent request to the Emperor.

The next testimony to which my opponent objects as spurious, is that of Suetonius, the biographer of the first twelve Cæsars. He says, "Suetonius is the next. The passage mentioned by this author is as follows. It is found in the life of Nero. He says, 'the Christians, a race of men of a new and villanous, wicked or magical superstition, were visited with punishment.' It is not very flattering

to the early Christians, the idea Suetonius gives of them. He does not say whether Christ ever lived. He says they were 'of a new, wicked, magical superstition,' and that, 'they were visited with punishment.' However this passage has been disowned by Christians. It is not I who disown it."

Now if atheists do not disown this passage, Christians certainly do not, so that it stands in all its integrity for what it is worth. And I can assure my opponent, that it contains but two adjectives as descriptive of the Christian religion, *new* and another, which according to its connection, may mean impious, or mischievous, or villanous, and sometimes magical; but in this passage it means impious, and is intended to convey the idea, that the Christians did not use idols in their devotions, nor worship the gods. A religion without these would be to the Romans an impious superstition; and so far as example and influence went, it might prove mischievous to heathenism, and so be deemed villanous, while the superiority of their morals and philanthrophy, as well as the truth of their religion, and the spirituality of their worship, rendered them as superior to their persecutor, as a true Christian is to the natural brute beast who worshipped an idol and murdered his mother.

The character which Suetonius gives the early Christians, if misrepresented, is certainly not very flattering; but calumny and a bad character are two very different things. And my opponent might have known, that every kind of mud will not stick on a clean smooth surface. But short as this sentence is,

which only tells us that the Christians were punished, he begrudges us the little testimony it yields; though not being able to disprove it's genuineness, without gross falsification, he reluctantly leaves it as he found it; rejoicing that it does not prove that Christ ever lived: for he emphatically says, that Suetonius "*does not say whether Christ ever lived.*" Perhaps not. Although in another passage in the life of Claudius, Suetonius says, that Claudius "expelled the Jews from Rome, because they were continually raising tumults under the instigation of Christ." In this sentence the Roman Christians are identified with Jews, because, like them, they were Jews by birth and national origin. As the tumults referred to, had their specific origin from Christ, it is more than probable, that they arose from the bitter attacks which the Jews and Mosaic Christians united to make on the truer disciples of Christ, who renounced the Mosaic ceremonial. The frequent disturbances which this "Herod and Pontius Pilate" combination produced, caused the above expulsion of all the Jews from Rome, in the latter part of Claudius's reign; after the close of which they again abounded in the capital. But as Suetonius states, that these riots arose from the instigation of Christ, he makes it as clear as a man in his circumstances could do, that Christ had lived, and that he had left certain doctrines behind him, for attachment to which, certain parties were persecuted at Rome, and involved in a common expulsion with their bigoted and hostile persecutors. Thus in the reign of Claudius, who died A.D. 54, we have Christ and Christianity, the materials for history.

The next name my opponent refers to, is that of Tacitus the historian. He says, that Tacitus in "his annals tells us, that the Christians were punished for their crimes." This short sentence is all he gives us from Tacitus, who has a long passage full of testimony to Christ and Christianity; but it was inconvenient for him to quote it, and therefore, he gives us only so much of it as exhibits the Christians as a rebellious set of men, who were necessarily and justly visited by the penalties of law. It is the same thing over again, as in the case of his extract from Suetonius, the answer to which must also be the answer to this. But notwithstanding, this passage, like that, is very short, my opponent leaves it with great jealousy, and lest it should, perchance, do us a little good, he very carefully tells us, as he surrenders it, that it was not published till A.D. 1468, and then only from a manuscript, which purported to have been written in the eighth century. What will he think when I tell him, that if Johannes de Spira of Venice had first discovered it in 1468, I should have received it as true. It may let a little light into his mind on this subject, to inform him, that some genuine fragments of Porphyry were first discovered and published A.D. 1816, by the celebrated Angelo Mai, the librarian at the Vatican. Also, that a work of Hippolytus against all heresies, was discovered in a convent on Mount Athos so recently, as A.D. 1842; and is now given to the world with every mark of genuineness. I may also tell him, that if the late date of the manuscript of Tacitus, from which de Spira's copy was made, at all deteriorates the passage as to its *historical value,* then the first five books, or, as in some

copies, the first six books of his annals—the most valuable part of his works, would be historically worthless, since they were not discovered until the sixteenth century, by Leo the Tenth's treasurer, in the monastry of Corvey, in Westphalia. My opponent has to learn, that the genuineness of a book depends upon many other things than the date of its publication, though that is not to be undervalued; especially where any doubt attends its authorship. But the number of surviving manuscripts of the Gospels is evidence in favour of their genuineness as histories of Christ, his doctrines and doings, as also of their early and wide circulation, since, although Tacitus the emperor, who claimed descent from Tacitus the historian, gave orders after his accession, that ten copies of his namesake's work should be annually transcribed and placed in the public libraries those libraries with all the multiplied transcripts of Tacitus have perished, and the single copy referred to above, as so recently discovered, is the only one known to have survived the devastations of time.

My opponent next refers to some Apocryphal writings which we value not; and then refers to Celsus and Porphyry in a tone of despair, saying, "There is not much possibility of doing anything with their writings," and so he "will take them both together." The plain meaning of which is, that they say so much directly about Christ and Christianity historically, as to cut all his ground from under him, and leave him foiled in our hands. But as this is a situation from which he convulsively

recoils, all he can do is to beat a retreat to the tune of unproved interpolations—a weak and cowardly way of escaping from difficulties. But Celsus distinctly notices all the circumstances of Christ's birth, the worship of the Magi, and the slaughter of the Innocents included. He allows, that Christ was regarded and worshipped as a Divine person by his disciples; and refers to Father, Son and Holy Ghost. He also acknowledges the miracles of Christ, without the slightest dispute, as well as their effect in making disciples; although as a heathen he attributes them to magic and not to a Divine power, which he did not understand.

There are two things which go to prove the truth of Celsus' testimony. The first is, that he was one of the bitterest enemies Christianity ever had, which would have led him to doubt and deny its history if he could. The second is his competency to speak of it from the time in which he lived, the latter half of the second century. This enabled him to speak of Christ as the founder of Christianity, and as having lived but a few years before himself. Nor is it unnatural that he should thus speak, or that we should regard him as speaking authoritatively respecting the history of Christ and Christianity, since a life or two were sufficient to connect him with the days of Christ. As an illustration of what we mean; Dr. Routh, president of Magdalen College, Oxford, has just edited a new edition of Burnet's Life of James the Second. Now it so happens that Dr. Routh has been sixty-one years president of Magdalen, and is in his ninety-seventh year. When an undergraduate

he knew Dr. Leigh, the master of Baliol, who was elected to that situation A.D. 1726, being then more than forty years of age, so that he was actually born in the reign of James II. Thus we have a book narrating events which occurred one hundred and sixty four years ago, given us by the living friend of one who knew the principal actors in them. Now Celsus flourished A.D. 176, and subtracting from that date thirty four years for the life of our Lord, he narrates events which occurred only one hundred and forty two years previously, being twenty two years less than serves to connect Dr. Routh, through Dr. Leigh, with the events of James the Second's reign.

In reference to Porphyry, we have to regret that the emperor Theodosius, A.D. 388, ordered his writings to be burnt because of their mischievous tendency. This was a mistaken zeal, and shuts us up to the extracts from them, which are made in the works of Christian controvertists, who wrote against them. Nevertheless, from these extracts, of the truthfulness of which we have no reason to doubt, we learn, that he regarded Christ as a good man, and as a real worker of miracles, and as having been taken to heaven by the gods at his death, because of his piety. Of the truth of his testimony to Christ and Christianity, so far as it goes, we are persuaded. As a Platonic philosopher, he would be severe in his scrutiny of Christian history and doctrine. As the most learned and acute antagonist Christianity ever had, he would jealously guard against admitting anything concerning it to be true,

if it did not fully compel an intelligent assent. Having been born A.D. 233, and his writings not having been burnt until A.D. 388, there would be, at least, a period of one hundred years, during which Christian writers would have ample time to become well acquainted with them. And his testimony is all the more valuable on this ground, that he conversed with Christians in Tyre, Sicily and Rome.

Having noticed the Jewish and heathen testimony put forward by my opponent, to disprove a historical Christ and Christianity, I think it may be fairly said that he has made nothing by it. On the contrary, his desperate effort to make Josephus say too much, in order that he might say nothing for Christianity; his rushing into the arms of the German rationalists, in order to destroy the testimony of Pliny; his mystification of Tacitus and Suetonius; his making the former to say less than he did, and his abandonment of Celsus and Porphyry in despair; shows that he felt that the testimony of the Jewish and Roman authors gave inevitable proof, that Christ was a historical personage, and that he originated Christianity, and that, therefore, this testimony must be got rid of by any means at command.*

* At the close of this lecture, when orally delivered, Mr. Shackleton declined to answer it, and I left the platform. Subsequently, at the call of my gifted friend Professor Fraser, M.A., he consented to defend his own lecture independently of mine. In the course of the discussion which followed, he said, that, though I had replied to all the foregoing writers, I had not referred to Philo; and broadly intimated that I should have done so had not his silence about Christ and Christianity been fatal to my cause. The state-

But as Christianity does exist in the world, and has been professed by many nations for fifteen hundred years or more, according to his own showing, he sets about finding it an origin. This he does

ment was in itself so trivial that, not being at liberty to notice it then, it quite escaped my memory long before the debate was closed. But lest Mr. S. should make it a stock argument, that one of the "Calvinist priests" had tacitly confessed himself beaten by his inability to account for the silence of Philo, I notice it here:—

Mr. S. ought to have known that a man in writing a book can only introduce such things as he is acquainted with. And I am bold to say that, lucklessly for my opponent's confident and reproachful tone, there is no evidence that Philo was acquainted with Christianity. He flourished A.D. 40, just six years after Christ's death, so that it is not surprising if Christianity should be then unknown in Alexandria, and especially as it did not lie on the route between Judea and Italy. Still less surprising is it, if it should not then have secured the attention of the philosophers there, to which body of men Philo essentially belonged as an Eclectic. And it is more than probable that Philo never knew much, if anything of Christianity, for Mangey, his English editor, proves to a demonstration, that when he wrote his account of the Therapeutæ, Christianity had not found its way into Egypt.

Inadvertence was the only cause of my not noticing the reference to Philo in the lecture; and the reader may see, from the reference itself, that my opponent did not attach importance to it, until he noticed my omission of it, since all he said was, that Philo, *the Egyptian*, who lived at that time, must have been acquainted with Christianity if it then existed, and if he had been acquainted with it, he would have certainly noticed it in his works. At such trifles do some men catch; though straws are not spars even to drowning men.

by asserting that the Essenes, the Therapeutæ and Eclectics, united themselves into a sect for its construction. The Essenes were a Jewish sect, and not Gentile Christians, as my opponent calls them; who some two hundred years before Christ, separated themselves from public life, and established themselves after a monastic fashion on the western shores of the Dead Sea. There they chiefly led a contemplative life. Some of them observed celibacy, and gave themselves to the education of children; while others married and devoted themselves to the active duties of life. The Therapeutæ were a sect of Alexandrian Jews in Egypt, who gave themselves wholly to contemplation, to the exclusion of the ordinary calling of the world. The Eclectics were a sect of heathen philosophers, who also arose in Egypt; —chiefly in Alexandria. They were men of discernment and moderation, who to avoid the absurdities and contradictions of the different sects of philosophers, who had successively arisen and waged war with one another, adopted Plato as their master, making certain modifications in his system, and adding to it whatever they found in other systems which they thought reasonable and coherent. In our Lord's time they were in a very flourishing condition at Alexandria.

In speaking of these three parties, as the originators of Christianity, my opponent's language is: "These three sects had aims and objects pretty nearly akin to each other; and when we come to examine them minutely, we find that they are exactly the three sects of men that, united together,

founded the first Christian body." Now it wants no minute examination to show that their aims and objects were not akin, and that they could not possibly be so. The thing was philosophically impossible. The whole of the philosophy of the Essenes and Therapeutæ consisted in maudling dreams, produced by a seraphic meditation; while that of the Eclectics was true philosophy, exhibiting mind at work in vigorous speculation, guiding its operations by certain principles, and logically labouring to conduct them to true issues. These three sects could not have united, unless it had been possible to have united oriental dreaminess with the mental acuteness and energy of the Greek. So neither could they unite on religious grounds. The Essenes were Jews, with modified and various views of the Mosaic writings and sacrifices, yet holding avowedly to Judaism; while the Therapeutæ made it their special boast that they were the true disciples of Moses. With that hatred and contempt which philosophers have ever shown towards believers in revelation, and which was, at that time, particularly evinced against the Jews, as an isolated and unsocial people, it is not to be believed that the Eclectics could have united with them to form a sect. If my opponent persists that they did, then I call for historical evidence of its existence, such as we have of the sects of the Epicureans, Stoics, Platonists and Eclectics.

But as if my opponent had some misgivings as to the amount of faith, which his statement of such an amalgamation would secure, he says that, "They had

set their heads to work and had culled together things from all the pagan systems in the world, made a hodge podge of it, and taught it in the schools themselves." Worse and worse! To say that two Jewish sects, who sought to make religion more spiritual, should join to adopt all the odds and ends of heathen idolatry, and so dovetail it together as to form a system of religion; and that in conjunction with the Eclectics, who looked with utter disdain on the superstitions of the masses! I do not wonder at his making them into a club of quack doctors, mistaking, as he has, the sectarian meaning of the word Therapute, which was intended to designate them as healers of the soul and not of the body.

If, however, all the quackery of these three sects was gathered up and condensed, it would not be so thorough a piece of quackery as this of my opponent when he says, that, by their union, they formed the first Christian church; and that they made Christianity out of the opinions in which they all agreed; and yet, that they made it out of a "hodge podge" of heathenism. I wish he had told us when they did it, and where, and how, and in what schools they edified their disciples by its exposition. On this he dare not venture, for, contending that the gospels were not published for nearly 300 years after Christ, and having some slight scent that people would know that such a junction of the three sects could not have taken place after the first century, he felt that to tell us when they framed their system, would be to tell us that the gospels *were published* in the first century, that is, imme-

diately after the events which they record. And he was sufficiently cunning to perceive that, if he admitted that they were published at that time, he would have an insuperable difficulty in the way of proving that they were not written by the men whose names they bear; and of escaping the conclusion that, with their genuineness thus reached, their authenticity must follow. But my opponent himself unintentionally proves that Christianity did rise in the first century, if he does not almost prove that it arose before our Lord's advent. He says: "In order to prove that the original churches, the body afterwards called Christians, were not formed for the purposes of religious worship, I need simply refer to the fact, that the first sixteen bishops of Jerusalem were all circumcised Jews, worshipping in the synagogues and temple." Poor men! They must have had short lives of it, unless fourteen or fifteen of them had lived before Christ's death, for from that time until the year before the destruction of the city and temple of Jerusalem, the apostle James was bishop or overseer of the Christian church there. Perhaps their succession dates from the prophet Malachi, and connects that prophet with my opponents "hodge podge;" notwithstanding what he elsewhere says that at the beginning of the second century the true church, called Christians by the Greeks, and Nazarenes by the Jews, chose a pastor by the name of Marcus, who was a Gentile by descent, that they might escape the inconvenience of being regarded as Jews by the Roman government.

My opponent, however, appears to have felt as if

he had made a blunder, and, as often happens, in trying to mend what is bad, he makes it worse. He tells us, that his threefold sect "were richer and more learned than the Jewish Christians at that time, who were called Nazarenes." By Nazarenes, he does not mean a sect of that name which arose in the second century, and from whom the Ebionites afterwards separated; but the Jewish Christians already referred to, who in interpreting the gospels adhered exclusively to Christ, to the entire rejection of the Mosaic Law and ritual; for he speaks of their having a church on Mount Zion; and, as just noticed, of their having a Latin bishop, in order to escape all suspicion of being Jews. Now as he calls his threefold sect the first Christian church; and speaks of these Nazarene Christians, as being contemporary with that church in the first century; he ought to have told us which was the true church; and which had the earlier origin, otherwise he leaves us with two Christianities, without letting us know to which of them we owe the gospels, or which of them sprung from those gospels. I fancy my opponent did not know, that these Nazarenes were so called by the Jews, simply to designate them as followers of Jesus of Nazareth, who declared the abrogation of the Mosaic law; and that by admitting their existence on Mount Zion, as Christians who repudiated all connected with the Jews, he also admits the historical existence of Jesus of Nazareth, and their direct origin as religionists from him and his apostles; that is, he admits, that Jesus Christ, our Lord and Founder, lived and founded the Christian

church in the first century, according to the gospels

To spare your patience, I pass by my opponent's rambling and untruthful remarks about the Ebionites and Gnostics; as also his speculations on the Logos, in which he repeatedly contradicts himself, for want of mental power to grasp the subject. In this want he has the comfort of failing in respectable company, for Cicero, who had translated the Timæus of Plato, frankly acknowledged that he could never understand it. But this confession of a man possessing so heaven-wide a superiority over my opponent in intellect and learning, more than nullifies his comfort, by putting him in the position of one who talks confidently about what he cannot comprehend.

There is, however, one point on this part of the subject which I cannot pass by without a word or two; viz.:—the obtaining a name for Christianity. Having made Christianity to be, first the united homogeneous opinions of Essenes, Therapeutæ and Eclectics; and then their "hodge podge" of heathenism; it struck him that the question might be asked, How did this system get called Christianity without a Christ? He, therefore, goes to work to find a Christ; and here you have the easy process by which he succeeds. He says:—"There is another thing before passing to the next point, to which it is necessary I should allude, and that is, how the Christians came to be possessed of the name of Christ—how they got the name of Christianity *if such an individual as Christ did not exist.* I have shown you that the word 'Christ' is an appellative signifying anointed. There is not a god among all the heathen

deities that had not this name 'anointed,' and as the Gentile Gnostics set up their phantom, they called him 'Christ,' meaning 'anointed.'"

My opponent knew, or ought to have known, that he stated what was false, when he said, that all the heathen deities were called "Christ." If he were doomed to substantiate it, I fear he would die before he had completed his task. But he unwittingly wars against himself, when he says, that the Gentile Gnostics set up their phantom and called him "Christ." For in that case there was previously no Christ; no, not even the phantom of one, in the system which was framed by his threefold sect; no, nor yet in their heathen "hodge podge." He was the peculiar possession of the Gnostics, for they both created and christened him; and having created him as their hero, it was natural, that they should designate the system of doctrine and worship which they derived from him "Christianity." Thus the Gnostics originated Christianity, and of course the gospels also, as its historical books. But unfortunately, again, for my opponent, the gospels no more agree with Gnosticism than with the homogeneous opinions; or with the "hodge podge" of his tripartite Eclecticism. And hence we have three Christianities, and no authorship for the gospels. Where is the fourth to which they belong? I shrewdly suspect that the primitive Nazarenes will have to submit to their fatherhood.

But as my opponent has given us three Christianities, so he seems anxious to supply us with two Christs; —the second being superior to the first for his pur-

pose, because he has associated with him baptism and the Lord's Supper. He tells us:—"There is, it is said, another reason why they made use of this word [Christ]. There was a deity worshipped among the Persians called Mithra,—the sun or light. They performed in that religion the rites of baptism and the Lord's Supper, just as some of the Christians do in their religion. The rite of baptism was called 'the holy ordinance of chrism;' and when we baptize, we call it 'christening,' from 'chrism.' As they 'chrismed' all their members, it needs but a little stretch to give them the name of Christians from such a thing." Yes, but did they give them this name from such a "thing?" And who are the "them" to whom it was given? And who are the parties who stretched a point to give it them? And when and where did they do it? This was, doubtless, intended to be fine, and so, without all doubt, it is, very, for it lets the light through, and shows us that, with all my opponent's abhorrence of Christianity he has his children "christened." And if the doctrine of baptismal regeneration should prove true, they will be Christians in spite of him and all his atheism. But according to his own argument, that a book cannot be a Jewish book which has in it Greek words, so neither can that be a Persian book which has in it Greek words, such as "Christ" and "chrism;" so that neither Christ, nor Christianity nor christening could come of Persian mythology; as assuredly they did not. Neither did it embrace within its rites baptism and the Lord's Supper. Nor did it call baptism "the holy ordinance of chrism."

I am unwilling to impute motives, as indeed I have no right to do, but what honest mind does not recoil with shuddering from this display of ignorance or cunning—which is it?—which, because it cannot annihilate the truth, attempts to throw dust in the eyes of the unreflecting, that they might not see it; and that, by using false statements, which it does not itself believe, for my opponent's language is, "*it is said.*" Such conduct must inevitably fail of its end, for persons of the slightest discernment will naturally say, if you do not believe in your own statements, why should we?

Notwithstanding all my opponent has previously said, he did not believe, that Christianity got its name, or its Christ, from either Persian mythology or Gnosticism: for, as if he were determined to give the credit of the name, and of the nature of Christianity, to his "hodge podge," he finds Christ in the heathen gods. This is no new dodge against revelation. The enemies of the Bible have long ago found Moses in Bacchus and Hercules, and Noah in Mithra; but my opponent finds Christ in them all; though identity will fail until he proves, that Noah, Moses and Christ, are one and the same person. And although he affirms a strong similarity, almost an identity, to exist between the birth, life and death of Bacchus, Prometheus, Esculapius and Christ, it must serve for the present to say, that as the similarity fails in the modes of their deaths, so it does in all other parts of their history. Christ was *crucified;* but, according to heathen mythology, Bacchus was mutilated and

drowned; and Esculapius was *killed by a thunderbolt.* Christ's *heart* was pierced when he was already *dead;* but according to heathen mythology, Prometheus was transfixed *alive* on a rock, and a vulture preyed on his *liver*, which was diurnally renewed for three thousand years. As to the identity which my opponent finds between Krishnu and Christ, for he goes to India when Greek and Roman mythology fails him, or excites in him a suspicion of weakness, there is none. Christ was the reputed son of a *carpenter*, and was a *man of peace* all his days; while Krishnu was the son of a *blacksmith* and warrior, and was *a man of war* from his youth. It was not, however, as a warrior, that Krishnu made the greatest number of his devoted worshippers, but as the lover of sixteen thousand milkmaids; to gain whose favour he converted himself into an equal number of sighing swains, while each fond maiden fancied herself the sole object of Krishnu's tenderness. Had he lived now he would have been the prince of socialists.

It is true, that to support the identity of Christ with Krishnu, my opponent says, that Sir William Jones states, that Christ and Krishnu are the same person. Sir William Jones could not have said so, because he says, "we may fix the time of Buddah, or the ninth great incarnation of Vishnu, in the year 1014, before the *birth* of Christ;" and then goes on to determine the age of Krishnu, to have been about two hundred years earlier. But my opponent evidently does not believe, that Sir William Jones said so, for his own words afterwards are, "Krishnu and Christ are not very different."

Yet as if my opponent had some misgivings as to the conclusiveness of his former reasonings respecting the origin of Christianity, and was determined to find it anywhere rather than in Christ and the gospels; and having, some how or other, got it into his head, that Christ and Krishnu are similar, he at once, with admirable agility, leaps to the conclusion, that Christianity sprang out of Hindooism. He says, "If we can demonstrate the worship of Krishnu to be older than that of Christ we establish the fact, that the worship of Christ is borrowed from the worship of Krishnu." A very logical conclusion indeed! Because in two religions there are an object of worship, worship, and worshippers, and the one of them is older than the other, the younger must have sprung from the older. By parity of reasoning, if two sets of trees, being trees with circulation of sap and fruit, precede each other in their vegetable existence, those which vegetate last must have sprung from those which grew first; which is a very clear proof, that the gooseberry trees in my garden sprang from the cedars of Lebanon.

By this kind of reasoning does he reach the demonstration that Christianity is Hindooism modified. He argues that the ancient astronomical calculations of the Hindoos, their ancient buildings and their inscriptions, which cannot now be deciphered, all prove that Hindooism is older than Christianity, and that, therefore, Christianity is Hindooism modified. The fallacy of this conclusion is sufficiently apparent. If it were not, the failure of the threefold condition which my opponent lays down makes *it abundantly* so; for the great antiquity of the

Hindoos, based on their astronomical calculations, ancient structures, and monumental inscriptions, is a piece of mere bagatelle.

As to their astronomical calculations—my opponent rests, like those whose assertions he retails, on Playfair's repetition of M. Bailly's opinion, the grounds of which he does not appear to have investigated. A modern work of great apparent impartiality, speaking of the opinion of more recent investigators of this matter, says, "Their reasoning appears completely to overthrow the arguments of Playfair upon the great antiquity of Indian astronomy. Amongst these, Marsden in the *Philosophical Transactions*, and after him, Bentley in the *Asiatic Researches*, hold the first rank. Suffice it to say, that Bentley has shown, in a very clear manner, that the *Surya Siddhanta*, the most ancient of all the astronomical performances of the Hindoos, and to which the Indian astronomers assign the ridiculous antiquity of 2,164,900 years, cannot be more ancient than the beginning of the eighth century, and that the celebrated tables of Tirvalore, which the Hindoos, and after them Playfair, assert were compiled from actual observation in the year of the world 902, have in reality only been written and dated 516 years ago." And Hetherington, in his "Fullness of Time," says of these tables, "They have been examined by La Place, by Cuvier, by Delambre, by Bentley and by Davis, and their fallacious character clearly ascertained. It has been proved also that they were constructed on a retrogressive calculation and assume an epoch invented for the purpose; since

it is inconsistent with known principles, of which their fabricator was ignorant, an ignorance, however, which would not have prevented him from stating facts and observations correctly, had these been its origin. While, therefore, we admit that specific dates are not to be depended on in very remote antiquity, we maintain that not even the shadow of an argument can be brought from chronology to shake the credibility of the Bible history."

Again, as to the antiquity of the remains of Hindoo architecture,—this also fails as the second part of my opponent's condition. None of the ancient cities of India survived to the era of modern history. Its capital of Canouge, built on the banks of the Ganges, of the extent of eight miles long by a mile-and-a-half wide, was seen by Megasthenes about three hundred years before Christ, and by him described to Strabo. Arrian also saw it towards A.D. 150. But with all its amplitude and magnificence it has passed away, like "the baseless fabric of a vision, leaving not a wreck behind."

On this subject Colonel Tod says, that there are no fine specimens of architecture in India, that date back beyond the tenth century. And as to the remarkable temple cave at Elephanta, Bishop Heber says he should assign no very great antiquity to it, on account of the friable nature of the rock out of which it is cut, and the evidently rapid decay going on, which is verified by the present state of the colossal elephant, from which the island takes its name, as compared with its condition when Niebuhr *saw it* only thirty or forty years before.

And in reference to the monumental inscriptions of India,—Colonel Tod found that those on one monument had been originally Sanscrit written over in Arabic; and if the same thing occurred elsewhere, ordinary scholars would be puzzled what to make of them, and sight seers and wonder-hunters would measure their antiquity by the vastness of the country. But supposing that these inscriptions are really in a language now unknown by those living there, it must be remembered that India is not one country but many, with nationalities and languages as distinct as the German, French, English and Welsh. And as India has undergone the vicissitudes of repeated conquest and internal commotion, it is not only possible but highly probable, that the people who spoke the language of these inscriptions have ceased to inhabit the localities in which they are found, and that the knowledge requisite to decipher them is yet wanting. And that different Indian nationalities, of different worship, have occupied the same locality, is evident from the fact that "within no great distance from Bombay, we have the caves of Kanara on the Island of Salsette, and those of Carli on the mainland, both evidently belonging to the Buddhists; while those of Amboli, also on Salsette, and of Elephanta on the adjacent island, belong to the Brahmins; and the wonderful caves of Ellora possess excavations of both."

Thus fails the third part, and with it the whole of my opponent's condition of the extravagant antiquity of Hindooism. But why did he adduce

it? Was it to prove that Hindooism antedates Christianity? Everybody knows that. Was it to convince us that because Hindooism preceded Christianity it must have been its parent? If so, it was labour in vain. Was it not rather to embrace the opportunity of talking largely about the amazing antiquity of India, in order to assault the Bible generally through the medium of chronology? This, it strikes me, was his real object. But after the reply you have heard on that point, I leave you to determine whether he has achieved it.

I have endeavoured thus far, as much as possible, to answer my opponent in detail. I will not, however, trouble you with a recapitulation of the course of remark pursued. Instead of that, I will very briefly indicate an outline of proof of the historical existence of Christ as the founder of our holy religion; of the early and extensive existence of Christians as his followers; and of the early publication of the Gospels, as containing an account of his life and doctrines. In treating of the first two of these topics I will call your attention to heathen testimony only, Josephus and another excepted, as the notices of Christian writers, under the third topic, will equally testify to the two former. This I shall do to save time, and not because I have any sympathy with that maudling and unrighteous feeling which leads some men to allow every set of men to be heard in their own cause except Christians. I do not hesitate to pronounce such a feeling a licentious one, going out to perpetrate a most fraudulent *injustice* on the best of causes and the best of men.

Our Lord Jesus Christ lived, and is a historical person. In showing this, we shall take our testimonies in an ascending series from Julian.

Julian, the emperor, lived in the middle of the fourth century, and was an apostate from the Christian faith. He always speaks of Christ as a public and well-known character, who wrought miracles and possessed a supreme power over unclean spirits and demons. It is true that he affects to ridicule the miracles of Christ; but as he could bring no disproof of them, he must be regarded when thus speaking of Christ, whose doctrine and cause he had abjured, as testifying to his superhuman character and mission, for men cannot ridicule what does not exist.

We have already seen that Porphyry, who flourished A.D. 250-300, notwithstanding his philosophic hate of Christianity, speaks of Christ as a well-known person, whom he honoured for his piety, on account of which he states, that the gods took him to heaven when he died.

In like manner we have seen that Celsus, who flourished A.D. 150-200, notices all the leading facts of Christ's history, from his birth to his death, the slaughter of the infants among the rest. He also states that Christ's disciples regarded him as a prophet; and that, believing him to be a divine person, they also worshipped him.

We have also seen that the Roman historian, Suetonius, in the passage which my opponent did not quote, but which I did, testifies to the existence of Christ, by stating that an expulsion of the

Jews from Rome took place, of which he was the occasion. But although Suetonius wrote A.D. 116, the event itself occurred A.D. 52; or within twenty years of Christ's death.

Tacitus, also, in a part of that longer paragraph to which I referred, but about which my opponent was prudently silent, says, that "the author of that name [Christians], was Christ, who in the reign of Tiberius was punished with death as a criminal, by the procurator Pontius Pilate." Tacitus wrote A.D. 110, but the event he records occurred A.D. 34; being exactly thirty years before that part of the Christian history under Nero, which he is then narrating. Thus near have we heathen testimony to the grand fact of Christ's death: and, therefore to his life; because they do not punish ghosts, or phantoms, with death as criminals. And the testimony is as precise as it is proximate, for it shows Christ to have been "numbered with the transgressors;" and so to have suffered death in the procuratorship of Pilate, in the reign of Tiberius. Thus also showing, that Roman history stated the fact and circumstances of Christ's death as soon as the gospels, indeed before that of John was written.

To Pliny's testimony we will only refer to say, that, so early as A.D. 107, he declared that the Christians in the Pontic provinces sung a hymn to Christ as God;—in that one sentence unwittingly giving a volume of evidence to Christ's existence, as a person of public and extraordinary character.

You have also seen that Josephus, who was born but about three or four years after Christ's death,

testifies very distinctly to Christ's existence as a man of unusual renown;—first, in noticing certain evil events which incurred the divine vengeance; and then to make better known his brother James, whom the Sanhedrim had unlawfully condemned to death.

As a concluding testimony on this point, we refer to the Acts of Pilate, which are his reports to the imperial government, of all extraordinary events which happened in his province, and which it was his duty to forward to Rome, that the emperor might be kept acquainted with them; and that they might be laid up with the muniments of the empire. To these Eusebius refers. And although my opponent treats him as a forger, there are many learned and thoughtful men, who have such confidence in his judgment and integrity, as to believe him when he says: "Our Saviour's resurrection being much talked of throughout Palestine, Pilate informed the emperor of it, as likewise of his miracles, of which he had heard; and that being raised up after he had been put to death, he was already believed by many to be a god." But rising nearer to the time of Christ, we find Tertullian, about the year 200, writing concerning Christ's crucifixion, resurrection, appearance to his disciples and ascension into heaven, appealing to these acts of Pilate thus:—"Of all these things relating to Christ, Pilate himself, in his conscience already a Christian, sent an account to Tiberius, then emperor." Rising yet nearer to our Lord's time, we find Justin Martyr, about A.D. 140, in his first apology, which was presented to the emperor Antoninus Pius, and to the Roman Senate, appealing to

these same acts of Pilate, to confirm the narrative of events attending the crucifixion. He says, "And that these things were so done, you may know from the acts made in the time of Pontius Pilate." And to prove that Christ performed miraculous cures, and raised the dead, he again appeals to them thus: "And that these things were done by him, you may know from the acts made in the time of Pontius Pilate."

These references to the acts of Pilate show several things. 1. That Pilate, as it was his duty to do, informed Tiberius of the extraordinary character and works of Christ, of his crucifixion and of an extensive report of his resurrection; as well as that many believed him to be a god. 2. That it was commonly known that Pilate did so. 3. That it was equally well known that these provincial reports from governors were deposited among the imperial records. 4. That they must have been known to be preserved among them, or Christian advocates could not so confidently have appealed to them; and especially when, as in the case of Justin Martyr, the appeal was made to the emperor himself, and to the Roman senate. 5. That these acts being there, we have evidence that there was a written record in the archives of Rome, of Christ's character, doings and sufferings, before a single gospel was written to benefit the church or instruct the world. Nor can there be any doubt, that it was from this source that Suetonius and Tacitus got their knowledge of Christ and Christians, just as modern historians obtain their materials from state paper offices, and government archives.

Thus, without going to the Scriptures, or to Christian writers, we have as complete historical proof as can be expected from such a source, that Christ lived and died as the founder of the sect called Christians.

In the second place, we have equally decisive testimony, that the Christians not only did spring from Christ, but that they were early known as a growing and wide-spread community.

That Christianity had spread far and wide, and that its disciples had become a large and important body in the time of Julian, A.D. 361, needs no proof, since that emperor could not otherwise have first identified himself with them, and then have abandoned and contemned them. But he distinctly acknowledges, that there were multitudes of them in Greece and Italy before John wrote his gospel; and, that there were respectable men among them, as Cornelius the centurion, and Sergius Paulus, proconsul of Cyprus, in the time of Claudius, who reigned A.D. 41-54. Thus he attests, as with imperial signet, that it was a historical fact that, within a period of from seven to twenty years after Christ, his disciples had greatly multiplied.

Porphyry, A.D. 270, admits, that they were very numerous in the Roman Empire; and, that they must have been so, is evident from his endeavouring to excite popular dislike against them, by attributing to them the troubles that befel the Empire.

They also must have been very numerous before they became the subjects of persecution and death for their religion. This they were, frequently, in the second century. And that they were firm in

their religious principles, is evinced by the fact, that they met death with fortitude and constancy. That they did so is attested by Galen, A.D. 200,—by the Emperor Marcus Antonius, A.D. 161,—and by Epictetus, A.D. 109.

To return to the latter half of the second century. We have Celsus, A.D. 176, attesting the gradual increase and excellence of the Christians. And in addition to him, we have Lucian, whose obscenities and ridicule of all religions, whether Christian or heathen, obtained for him the appellations of atheist and blasphemer. As he died, A.D. 180, in his ninetieth year, his testimony is as referable to the former half of this century as to the latter. But to whichever it be assigned, he proclaims the crucifixion of the founder of Christianity in Palestine; and, in addition to that, that He was worshipped by the Christians. Of them he says, they were well known in the world, and had become numerous in Pontus, Paphlagonia, and the surrounding countries; and, that they were the terror of cheats and impostors.

We come now to Tacitus' longer paragraph, of which my opponent was so shy. We will not quote it all, but observe, that, after Tacitus has said Nero was anxious to throw off the reproach of firing Rome, by attaching it to the Christians, whose author, he says, was crucified in Palestine, he proceeds:—"But this pestilent superstition, though checked for a while broke out afresh, not only in Judea, where the evil first originated, but even in the city [Rome], the common receptacle into which everything filthy and *atrocious* flows from all parts of the world." He

then says, that vast multitudes of them were condemned, not so much for firing the city, as for their enmity to mankind. This passage attests the following facts:—that Christ was crucified in Judea—that Christianity arose there, and was derived from him, —that Christians who embraced his doctrines remained faithful amidst persecutions and death, and that, though the spread of Christianity was repressed for a while, by the death of its founder, its subsequent spread was so rapid and great, as to afford even at Rome, great multitudes of victims to Nero's cruel policy and to popular hate. Of this passage the integrity is most fully admitted by Gibbon, who liked Christianity as little as my opponent does. His words are:—"The most sceptical criticism is obliged to respect the truth of this extraordinary fact, and the integrity of this celebrated passage of Tacitus."

Of the testimony of Suetonius, we say no more here, than, that Gibbon also confirms the truth of his statement, as to the existence and persecution of Christians at Rome.

The testimony of Pliny on this point is equally explicit. He says there are a "great number of persons who are in danger of suffering; for many of all ages, of every rank, of both sexes likewise, are accused, and will be accused. Nor has the contagion of this superstition seized cities only, but the lesser towns also, and the country at large." He also says, that Christianity had become so popular, that heathen temples "were almost forsaken." This was written A.D. 107.

About this date, we have equally decisive testi-

mony to the spread of Christianity, in the unquestionable epistle to Diognetus. This ancient writing declares, that Christians inhabited "Grecian and foreign cities," and that they were diffused "through all the states of the world." Besides, which, it more than once mentions their persecution, and their increase in consequence of it.

All these witnesses go to prove, that the Christian church sprang from Christ as its founder,—that soon after his death it was widely spread abroad in the provinces of the Roman Empire, that it was extensively and well established in the world before, and independently of, any conglomerate body of Essenes, Therapeutæ and Electics, such as my opponent has created, in order to account for its origin, that its real author may not have the credit of its foundation. But it did begin in Judea with the crucified One, and cannot be separated from Him.

In the third place; to prevent the conclusion that, if Christ did live and found a sect at the beginning of our era, the Christian church as now existing is a continuation of that sect, and so the immediate doctrinal descendant of Jesus Christ, my opponent not only asserts that the first Christian church was not formed for religious purposes, but also that the gospels, on which the Christian church at large rests, were not published for three hundred years after the date of Christ's reputed advent. His aim in these assertions being to prove that the late publication of these gospels makes it impossible for them to contain a true account of Christ's life and doctrine, supposing him to have lived, as we believe,

and that, therefore, as the gospels are false, the Christian church founded on them cannot have been founded by Christ. As the testimonies of their enemies to the doctrines held by the early Christians show that they were the same as those set forth in the gospels, and that their knowledge of Christ's life was substantially the same as that which they communicate, this part of his lecture savours largely of special pleading. We must, however, meet it. As he assigns the date A.D. 300, or thereabouts, for the publication of the gospels, I presume he will not quarrel with the testimony of Eusebius, whom Hartwell Horne describes, not as my opponent did, but as "a man of extraordinary learning, diligence and *judgment*." In A.D. 315, he declares the four gospels, as we now have them, to have been unanimously received by the Christian church, as the authentic productions of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John; and this, after a very diligent examination of all the writings of the early Christians which he could procure.

Origen lived still earlier, for he died at the age of 70, A.D. 253, and that in Egypt, and not in Judea as Eusebius did. Yet he, at that time and in that country, gives us a complete catalogue, not only of the four gospels, as written by the four evangelists, but also of all the books of Scripture which Christians generally received as inspired apostolical writings.

At the same time lived Dionysius of Alexandria, who, A.D. 247, uses and compares the four gospels, not only as authentic, but as the only authentic histories of Christ.

Tertullian of Carthage, who lived A.D. 160-220, uses the four gospels as, without doubt, the production of the four evangelists, whom he distinguishes thus: Matthew and John he calls apostles, Mark and Luke as apostolical men; whose writings he asserts were divinely inspired, and that they were received as such by Christians from the date of their publication.

At the same time with Tertullian lived Clement of Alexandria, the tutor of Origen, a man of extensive travel and learning, and who, therefore, as the more cautiously, so the more authoritatively, gives us the order in which the four gospels were written.

By the testimony of one inhabitant of Palestine and of four persons in Egypt, we have seen that the four gospels not only existed before A.D. 300, but also that, in the previous century, they had been used as genuine and authentic, and received as such by the church from their earliest date. We turn now to men in other nations.

Theophilus of Antioch, A.D. 181, and Athenagoras of Athens, the philosopher, A.D. 180, both refer, the one by direct quotation, and the other by evident allusion, to the gospels of Matthew and John.

Before them was Tatian, A.D. 172, who, after the death of Justin Martyr, fell into various heresies. He composed a harmony of the four gospels, corrupted, indeed, to suit his altered tenets; but he could not have composed a harmony of four gospels, and corrupted them, unless that number had existed.

Two years earlier, we have Irenæus of Lyons, in *Gaul* (France), who, A.D. 170, received the four *gospels* as written by the four evangelists. That

he fully regarded them as genuine and authentic, is evident from the fact, that, speaking of the Christian Scriptures collectively, including the gospels, he calls them, "The Code of the New Testament." He also unites them with the Jewish Scriptures, as equally "the oracles of God, and writings dictated by his Word and Spirit." Having been born in the Greek church, and having afterwards entered the ministry in the Latin church, his testimony shows that the four gospels were used by both those great divisions of the church, as then distinguished. Having been the disciple of Polycarp, who was the disciple of the Apostle John, his testimony shows that he knew that the four gospels were those which, from the beginning, were received among the disciples of Christ.

We now go upwards to Justin the Samaritan, who was born A.D. 89. He was converted to Christianity when forty-four years of age, and suffered martyrdom A.D. 164-167. He frequently quotes the four gospels—always uses them as the genuine and authentic record of Christ's life and doctrine—calls them, among other names, "Christ's memoirs," and "Memoirs of the Apostles and their companions, who have written the history of all things concerning our Saviour Jesus Christ," and states that they were read and expounded in the public assemblies of Christians.

What Irenæus showed in the latter half of the second century, that Justin Martyr shows in its first half, that the four gospels, as we now have them, were generally known, received and used by the

Christian church, as the authentic record of Christ's life and doctrine, from which that church drew its profession, faith and hope; and by which it was animated to meet sufferings and death for Christ's sake.

In this period, we must include Papias, of Hierapolis, who was acquainted with Polycarp and John the elder, both of whom, supposing the latter does not mean the Apostle John, were apostolic men. In the few fragments of his which remain, he makes express mention, A.D. 110-116, of the gospels of Matthew and Mark.

Here also we may notice the testimony of Ignatius, who was bishop at Antioch, A.D. 70-107 or 116. He had certainly had familiar intercourse with the apostles, and was well acquainted with their doctrine, as well as with the gospels; and in the epistles which he has left us, he directly quotes the gospels of Matthew and John.

Ignatius has brought us fairly into the latter half of the first century, by his writings; and into fellowship with the apostles in his life. In a similar position does Clement, of Rome, also place us. He was the fellow-labourer of the Apostle Paul, and is supposed to have been bishop at Rome, A.D. 91-100. In the fragment of an epistle to the church at Corinth, all of his that survives to us, he uses the words of Christ, as they stand in our gospels, not with the formality of citation, but with all the ease of long familiarity; of which he evidently supposes the Corinthians to be possessed with himself.

I might have brought forward Porphyry in the third century, and Celsus in the second, to prove the

existence of the gospels in their day, on the ground, that they refer to their contents in order to controvert them;—and I suppose they would not controvert what did not exist; but I forbear. If my opponent should try to escape, or weaken the force of the preceding evidence, by imagining, or asserting, that other writings might have existed before A.D. 300, which have been mistaken for the present gospels; I tell him it will not avail, because whatever they were, they contained the same facts and doctrines as our gospels do, and were received from hand to hand, from the evangelists down to the time of Eusebius, after which my opponent cannot deny their existence. If he is still unsatisfied, I challenge him to the disproof of Paley's position, "that, besides our Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles, no Christian history, claiming to be written by an apostle or apostolical man, is quoted within three hundred years after the birth of Christ, by any writer now extant, or known; or, if quoted, is not quoted with marks of censure and rejection."

Whether the testimony I have adduced does not destroy my opponent's position, that the gospels were not published until three hundred years after Christ's advent—and whether it does not prove, in the strongest possible way, that they were written by the four evangelists, and that at the dates assigned them—and whether they were not early published and received by the Christian church in the first century and afterwards, as genuine and authentic, I leave you to determine.

We must now turn our attention, though very

briefly, to the doctrine of the Trinity. Here my opponent has lost himself in a maze of ideas and words. I will, however, try to deal with him in all honesty. He says, that the first chapter of John was written by one of the Platonists. And after stating, that all religions, in every age and country, had their Trinity, he professes his preference for the Platonic mode of its exhibition. He then says, "The doctrine of the Trinity was first taught in this manner; and gradually and by degrees, and not till four hundred years afterwards, did it get fairly established that the Trinity was a thing of this description. The *first* idea was that there was *the Word*, then *matter*, then the *Word acting* on matter." He had previously said, "The Platonists taught that *first* there must have been in existence *matter*, then *spirit*, then *spirit acting* on matter, and producing the *word*—logos, that is mind." In the one case matter exists first, and then spirit produces the word; and in the other, the word exists first, and, as a matter of course, when matter appears, by acting on it, the word produces spirit. I do not suppose it matters which is first, unless you can understand the matter better than I do. He then goes on to say, "We shall see if we look into this, that there are not three distinct and separate things, but one." And again:—"As far as I have been able to read and ascertain, from the first origin of these disputes to the present time, this [Platonism] is the origin whence the doctrine of the Trinity is sprung." And again:—"Theodosius was the first man who finally settled the doctrine of the Trinity."

Not possessing the metaphysical acumen of my opponent, nor his acquaintance with Plato, which he says he acquired by looking "as nicely as possible to his arguments, to get at his exact meaning when talking about the logos, the spirit and God," I am obliged to guess at what he wishes us to understand about the Trinity. If I am not mistaken it was this, that out of a natural pantheism, which my opponent finds in Plato, Christians have formed a personal, objective God, whom they regard as the creator and ruler of the universe; that this one God they also regard as three in the mode of subsistence, and one in essence; and that this doctrine of three in one was not really settled and adopted until A.D. 400, or thereabouts.

As to the settling of this doctrine I have nothing to do. The New Testament settles it for me. My object will be to show that Christians acknowledged and worshipped the Triune Jehovah,—Father, Son and Holy Ghost, — not only four centuries after Christ, but through all those centuries from the beginning of our era. I will merely indicate the outline of proof, as I have just done on another part of the subject.

A.D. 304, Martialis, who suffered martyrdom at Cordova, in Spain, said to the judge who condemned him, "Christ is my comfort, Him I always praise with the same joy with which my companions have confessed his name in their torments: for there is only one God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, to whom praise and glory are due."

In the same year, when at the stake as a martyr,

on the present site of the city of Augsburg, Afra said, "I offer myself a victim to Thee, O my God, who livest and reignest with the Father and the Holy Spirit, world without end."

About the same time, when suffering the torture, Euplius said, "I adore the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, besides whom there is no God."

A.D. 247, Dionysius of Alexandria used the following doxology: "To God, the Father and to the Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, together with the Holy Spirit, be glory and power for ever and ever. Amen."

A.D. 185-254, Origen says: "We worship one God, the Father and the Son, let us then assist ourselves, that we become not unworthy to have our understanding thus enlarged, but, that our mind, being first rendered a holy place, may be fitted for the reception of the holy mysteries, by the grace of the Holy Spirit, by whom whatever is holy is sanctified. To him be glory and power for ever and ever. Amen."

A.D. 230, Hippolytus, the pupil of Irenæus, the pupil and friend of Polycarp, the disciple of the Apostle John, says: "It is the Father who commands, the Son who obeys and the Holy Ghost who gives wisdom. The Father is above all, the Son is through all and the Holy Ghost is in all. We cannot form a conception of one God in any other way, unless we really believe in the Father, and the Son and the Holy Ghost." He also says that Christ gave the command, Matt. xxviii. 19, to baptize in the name of the blessed Trinity, "showing that whoever omits any one of these, does not perfectly

glorify God. For the Father is glorified by the Trinity. For the Father willed, the Son executed, the Spirit manifested."

A.D. 206-220, Clemens Alexandrinus prays that we may "praise the only Father and the Son, the Son and the Father, the Son our teacher and master, together with the Holy Spirit, in all things One.

A.D. 179-202, Irenæus, already noticed as the pupil and friend of Polycarp, prays, "that we should know thee who hast made heaven and earth, and rulest over all; who, with our Lord Jesus Christ, rulest in the power of the Holy Spirit, and art the only true God, besides whom there is no God."

A.D. 133-164 or 167, Justin Martyr, repelling the charge of Atheism for not worshipping the heathen gods, says, but "the most true God, the Father of righteousness, the Son who has come from Him, and the prophetic spirit, we worship and adore."

About A.D. 147, Polycarp, the disciple of John, suffered martrydom for the truth, at Smyrna. He died at a very advanced age, having, most probably, been the contemporary of all the Apostles. His beautiful language is, "For this [martyrdom] and for all things else I praise Thee, I bless Thee, I glorify Thee, through the eternal High Priest, Jesus Christ thy beloved son, through whom to Thee, with Him in the Holy Ghost, be glory, both now and to all succeeding ages. Amen."

Such is the testimony I adduce to show, that the doctrine of the Triune Jehovah was held and professed, not only before the time of Theodosius, but uninterruptedly from the days of Christ downwards

For the sake of brevity I have omitted the separate testimony to the Deity of the Son, borne by the churches of Asia, Africa and Europe; as also the testimony, that the doctrine of the Trinity was that of the Christians, borne by the emperor Julian in the fourth century, by the philosopher Porphyry in the third century and by Celsus in the second century. There is, however, one testimony to this fact which I cannot pass unnoticed; it is that of the laughing, blaspheming atheist, Lucian. In one of the dialogues ascribed to him, he, in a strain of banter, introduces a Christian teaching a heathen the doctrine of the Trinity, and in reply to the heathen's question, "By whom shall I swear?" he makes the Christian to reply, "By the God that reigns on high, the great, the immortal, the heavenly, the Son of the Father, the Spirit proceeding from the Father, One in Three, and Three in one. Take these for your Jupiter, imagine this to be your God." The ridicule thus thrown on the doctrine of the Trinity in the middle of the second century, shows, that the writer knew it to be the generally received doctrine of the Christian church. But I have introduced this passage, quite as much for what Socinus says of it, as for its own sake. He says, "I never met with anything, which seems more to favour the notion, that a Trinity of Persons in the godhead was, in that age, the object of belief and worship, than this passage from the dialogue styled Philopatris."

My opponent will feel, that this testimony, from *one* whom he regards as favouring his cause rather

than ours, is both decided and strong. And I hope he will feel, that it proves to a demonstration, that Theodosius did not give the doctrine of the Trinity shape or form; but that, whatever he may think of the doctrine itself, it existed through the whole of the first four centuries, as that of Christians who believed in the existence of God, without explaining the mode of that existence, until the unhappy Arian controversy.

Of the dark ages and the dawn of mental light I need not say much, since all my opponent says, may be thus stated. At first, Christianity moved and succeeded by its own energy and the zeal of its adherents, but as soon as the state took it into connection with itself, it resorted to the sword and slaughter as Mohammedanism did. As a fruit of its tyrannical cruelty arose the inquisition, and a long list of wars in which millions of human beings were slain.

My opponent will allow me to say, that, much as I abhor, not Roman Catholics, but Roman Catholicism; and much as I condemn the Inquisition, and all its doings; and I do so as fully and sternly as he can, yet I think he gains nothing by wholesale and indiscriminate abuse of the priesthood, for in times gone by, many of that body have bearded monarchs and resisted the nobility in favour of the people. And as to my opponent's assertion respecting the priests, and we Dissenters are included as well as others, that "they have been the men who, of all others, have had the tendency to bring the human race into the miserable condition in which we now find it," I have only to say that, it is a very re-

markable thing, that England, the most Christian nation under the sun, is just that country, of all others, in which there is most liberty and solid comfort for the people generally. Had my opponent lived among the Greeks or Romans, of whom he is so fond, he would have been a slave and not a freeman. And in this respect the Jews, whom he so unfeignedly hates, excelled those nations; for among them a mechanic was esteemed an honourable member of society; while in Greece and Rome he was treated as the lowest of the populace.

In reference to the wars which he states to have been the necessary fruit of Christianity, in two instances he falsifies history. He charges the Irish massacre on Cromwell; whereas he well knew that Cromwell, as the civil magistrate, did but restrain and punish the Roman Catholic slaughter of the Protestants. Surely the civil magistrate is not to bear the sword in vain. In like manner, he says, "the religious war of Japan, instituted by the Jesuits, cost four hundred thousand lives. This is the only instance in his lecture in which his figures do not err on his own side. Unhappily, not four hundred thousand, but several millions, fell in that war; but he is wrong as to its prime cause. An usurper had dethroned the political sovereign of Japan. His son succeeded him, and made the succession hereditary in his own family. Both being enemies to the Roman Catholics, and more than half the Japanese had become such, it was at once seen that, if they should unite, they would be too strong for the usurpation; and thence arose the horrible slaughter that ensued. I

do not say that the Jesuits were not there, as they are everywhere, crafty and plotting in political matters; or that they did not advise the dethroned monarch to seek to regain his sovereignty; but no overt attempt had been made to do it. It was a war of usurpation, inasmuch as, when all the Jesuit missionaries, and the Portuguese with them, had been banished, the native born subjects might have been spared. Instead of that, a persecuting war of extermination was carried on for forty years, until A.D. 1638, when all traces of Roman Catholicism were extinguished. As to the three hundred thousand slain, as he says, in the Arian controversy, I should like him to remember, as he prefers Arians to Trinitarians, that Arius fiercely anathematized the latter; and though he was allowed quietly to retire from Alexandria, his party several times banished Athanasius; and that the whole of that disgraceful contest was rather that of the adherents of a less pure faith against those of one more pure, than the contrary.

But as to all the thousands slain in this, or in the Homo-ousian contest, or in the crusades, or in the conquest of South America by Pizarro and Cortes; I boldly declare, that Christianity neither necessitated, nor led to their destruction. It could not do so. Its essential elements are love and holiness; and its fundamental principle of social intercourse is, "do unto others as ye would that they should do unto you." To say that Christianity ever produced persecution, or murder, is to say, that the sun eclipses itself.

My opponent felt this, and hence the following bit

of bravado. "I am well aware that the gentlemen around me will tell me that these men were not Christians who did these things. I tell you they were Christians; and if you had told these men they were not Christians, they would soon have let you know if they were not." My opponent's assertion does not, however, make them Christians; and if I could have told them that they were not, and they had knocked me down, the blow with which they felled me would only have proved my truthfulness, and made the non-Christianity of their character the more apparent. As to his declaration that these persecutors and murderers were as sincere in their belief of the truth of Christianity, as we are, I have only to say, that I shall never receive as Christianity a caricature drawn from the unchristian conduct of inconsistent professors. Men may hold good principles and do evil deeds, which only shows, that their evil deeds were originated by something as evil as themselves, and not by principles of good. I hold tenaciously to the adage, misapplied by my opponent, "By their fruits shall ye know them." So said our blessed Lord, and so say we, who find Christianity in his spirit and doctrine, and not in cruel hearts and murderous deeds.

But since my opponent lays on Christianity the blame of all the wars that have made the human race so miserable as it is, I should like him to tell me, if Christianity waged the Egyptian and Assyrian wars of old? Was it Christianity, in the days of her insignificance, that besieged Jotapa, and slew forty *thou*sand of its people, when defended by Josephus?

Did she besiege Jerusalem, slay one hundred thousand of her inhabitants, and carry ninety thousand more into slavery? Was it she who slew, banished or enslaved, more than a million Jews in that war, which ended in that siege? Did Christianity wage the many destructive wars of the Romans, which took place after her advent into this world? Did she persecute herself, and imprison, enslave and martyr her own sons and daughters, by thousands after thousands? No! emphatically no. It was not Christianity who either did or originated these things. They were directly produced by what Christianity abhors and condemns. They had their cause in pride of intellect; in the love of rule; in the lust of conquest; and in thirst for wealth.

But I would ask my opponent, was it Christianity that produced the disgraceful contests and dissensions in the Roman Empire, which not only constituted the "worse part" of her history, as he would call it, but caused her decline and fall? No! it was atheism. The doctrines of Lucretius did not all at once establish themselves; but as they did, they proved to be elements of decay, insinuating themselves into the vitals of the empire, causing its gradual corruption and ultimate ruin.

Again, I would ask him, was it Christianity, that slew a mlllion and a half of people in the first French revolution? No! that is distinctly and inseparably connected with atheism as effect and cause. In her godless folly she dethroned the most High, closed the sanctuaries of religion, banished the priesthood, and superseded the weekly sabbath

by a holiday every tenth day. Her decree was, there shall be no religion; and then she laboured to show, that she had no humanity, for with brutal ferocity she murdered princes, slew the noble, the rich, the religious; sequestered and appropriated private property, and maltreated all whose political tinge was not as sanguinary as red republicanism, and whose religious hue was not as dark as the midnight pall of atheism; darker than the grave. Yes; in la Vendée alone, she slew nine hundred thousand Frenchmen, because they were too religious and too loyal to live under the glorious republic!

Now I admit, that the French nation had previously been oppressed, bowed down with taxation; and, that the priesthood had left her in ignorance; but it was a "secular," not a religious priesthood. Notwithstanding all this, she threw away the opportunity of entering on one of the most brilliant careers of constitutional liberty, that ever presented itself to an awakening people, rising in its majesty, and determining to frame its own laws, and control its own affairs. Yes, she threw it away! She was all the less excusable, as she had the example of America before her, who has become great, glorious,—and I wish I could add, as I hope we shall soon have to do —*free;* while she herself is popularly feeble and enslaved. But there was this difference between the two,—America had Christianity guiding and controlling her,—France had atheism bewildering and corrupting her. Atheism was her fly in the ointment, which polluted the whole, and made it stink in the nostrils of the nations. Nor do I doubt, that athe-

ism marred the last French revolution, and helped greatly to its undoing. Wherever atheism is, there must be a depraved and depraving state of society. Witness Greece after the age of Pericles, Rome after the reign of Augustus, and France after the ascendancy of the système de la nature. It cannot be otherwise. It gets rid of the moral governor of the world, of his moral law, and of man's moral accountability. It leaves man no system of morals, if that be not a misnomer, but what is found in personal convenience and a sense of propriety, which are as fluctuating as the passing feelings and interests of the day. In such a state of things as this, selfishness must be the rule and motive of life, and self its object. Let it obtain, and the heart must grow hard, and the feelings cruel,—the bonds of government must be loosened, and the affections of society relaxed and degraded.

Let us now ask what atheism has to offer us instead of religion, of which it seeks to rob us? Is it secularism in all its fulness and in all its exclusiveness? Yes, that is it. But we have it in all its fulness, so far as the pursuits and benefits of this world are concerned. We live, we eat, we drink. We labour and live by our labour. We form friendships, enjoy domestic bliss, and live in security as members of the body politic. We can tread the green earth and gaze upon the starry sky. We can enjoy the glory of summer and the grandeur of winter. We can pursue the arts, sciences and philosophy of this world, and reap their fruits. We are, as to this world, already equal to atheists and something better. For if religion be a dream, the con-

fidence we have in the God of our faith; the courage and fortitude his providence inspires; and the delightful pleasures and relief his promises yield: are all so precious to us, and so choice an addition to the secularism we possess in common with atheists, that the attempt to rob us of them betrays a feeling so ill-natured, so envious, so maleficent, that atheists must not wonder to hear us say, "Get thee behind me, Satan, thou *savourest* not the things that be of God, but those which be of men."

In closing this lecture I may remark, that I have expressed myself earnestly, strongly and perhaps indignantly, but I assure my opponent and his partner in this discussion, that the feelings which have originated such expression, have been towards their system rather than themselves. And I can further assure them both, that such is the elevating and dignifying influence arising from faith in God; such the courage and fortitude amidst the duties of life, from a reliance on his gracious providence; such the certainty of action, from the adoption of his commands and the principles of holiness; such the consolation in adversity, and solace in sickness and the prospect of death, from his loving and multiplied promises; and above all, such is the joyous hope of glory, honour, immortality beyond the grave, flowing from the heart's faith in Christ crucified, that I would fain hope that, by divine grace, they may yet be brought to the knowledge of God and of his truth, so that, with us, they may enjoy the benefits of religion now, and hereafter participate the fruition of its blissful issues in eternity.

LECTURE IV.

"MODERN CHRISTIANITY AND SECULARISM PHILOSOPHICALLY EXAMINED AND COMPARED."

The subject allotted to me, and to which I respectfully solicit your attention, is the last of the series, and is entitled, "Modern Christianity and Secularism philosophically examined and compared." The examination and comparison were to have been made by Mr. Shackleton, on Friday evening, February 25. 1853, but for reasons best known to that gentleman, neither the one nor the other was forthcoming. It is true that he delivered a lecture on that occasion, but it might have worn almost any other title with as much appropriateness as the one which appeared in the public bills. The words Christianity and Secularism, indeed, are of frequent occurrence in it, but not only are they employed without any definition, they do not receive at the hands of the lecturer any general description which will enable an ordinary hearer to understand what the two things are, which he professes to have examined and compared. That the

object, whose claims he was to have adjudicated, assumed a distinct and palpable shape in his own mind I am not disposed to doubt, but I am compelled to say, that the lecture, *as delivered*, betrays a bewildering confusion which baffles every attempt to learn from *it*, the nature either of Christianity or Secularism.

Then it is somewhat puzzling to learn how the word "philosophically" has crept into the title, as whatever accusation I may have to bring against the lecture, I should be guilty of great unfairness in charging it with the remotest pretensions to philosophy. Any competent and honest jury would give it a speedy and unanimous verdict of acquittal. In short, whatever may be the reason, whether it was by mistake or intention, whether it was incompetence or reluctance on the part of the lecturer, after the announcement of the subject, to enter into a fair and comprehensive treatment of it, somehow or other it has come to pass that the title and lecture do not agree; that the performance is in egregious incongruity with the promise. This is, to me, matter of sincere regret, as it affords but slender materials upon which to ground a reply. Whatever has been incidentally introduced, however, bearing upon the respective merits and claims of Christianity and Secularism, I trust I shall give to it all the consideration it may deserve—meeting argument by argument—but leaving Mr. Shackleton in the unshared possession of vulgar slang and rancorous abuse, as they are alike alien to my taste and to the dignity of *that truth* which, in my firm belief, is the only

effective instrument for the moral regeneration of the world.

Holding, as I do, that all men are immortal, that, in addition to a physical organization, which allies us with the brutes that perish, we have an immaterial spirit distinct from it, though in the present state mysteriously associated with it, which thinks, feels, reasons, experiences complacency and remorse, and is capable of agony or rapture—a spirit whose phenomena, and, therefore, whose nature, are totally distinct from those of matter—a spirit which is destined to an endless duration of being and consciousness—a spirit whose happiness or misery hereafter will be determined by the moral character which it carries with it from the present state—a spirit which can only acquire fitness to enjoy the purity and happiness of God's presence, by the reception of the truths and influences embraced in and conveyed by the Gospel—holding all this, you will not wonder if I regard with emotions of sadness the spectacle of men who make light of these things, and represent human life as but a brief procession to the grave. It cannot be the same to man whether these solemn views of his nature, life and destiny, are true or false, and hence, even in the judgment of common sense, nothing can be more misplaced and censurable than either a resolute expulsion of all thoughts of religion from the mind, or a flippant and superficial treatment of its evidences and claims.

You will observe that here I do not affirm Christianity to be true—but that *I believe it to be true;* and, further, believe that its truth is sustained

by such a variety and abundance of evidence, as to convict of the densest ignorance, or something worse, any man who can speak of it either as a dishonest because conscious forgery, or an undesigned accumulation of myths.

It is not, however, my province this evening to detail the manifold evidences of Christianity. The subject before us is "Modern Christianity and Secularism, philosophically examined and compared."

I. In the outset it may be well to define the terms; to know what the two things are of which a comparison is to be instituted, and thus we may succeed in delivering the subject from that confusion in which it was left by Mr. Shackleton.

1. What is the precise import of Secularism? The word is new, at least in its application, to the thing which is here contrasted with Christianity. A new word ought properly to be applied to a new thing, or to an old thing as conceived under a new aspect. What is the thing which claims our attention under this denomination? Is it some new discovery or invention? Does it denote a collection of truths but recently brought to light? Is it in the *moral* world something like what railways and electric telegraphs are in the *physical, new things*, and, therefore, justly deserving new names? or is it even a new error or bundle of errors? It is neither the one nor the other. There are some truths or opinions which a secularist cannot consistently hold. He cannot be a deist and believe in a God of infinite power, wisdom, holiness, goodness and mercy, for *such a faith* necessarily involves an obligation to

discharge certain duties in relation to such a being—duties which the secularist openly repudiates. A secularist, then, is in fact an atheist, and assumes a two-fold shape, according as he is *dogmatical* or *sceptical*, that is, according as he *positively* denies the being of a God or suspends his judgment, cautiously confessing that he is *in doubt* whether he exists or not. A corresponding difference of opinion obtains among secularists respecting a future state; some confidently denying its existence, and others ranking it among matters of uncertainty. They are all, however, distinguished *theoretically* by their *non-belief* in a God and a future state; and practically by their living, speaking and acting without any regard to the motives and influences drawn from these sources. How far those secularists are consistent, who do not absolutely deny the existence of a God and a future state, who admit both to be possible, and yet who live as if they could demonstrate them both to be the veriest fictions, we shall see in the course of the lecture.

It is another feature of the system which many are seeking to substitute for Christianity that it professes to be able to supply the world with a just and perfect ethical code bearing on all the duties of man, personal, domestic, social, civil and political, and that without being in any wise indebted to the word of God. Its capability in this respect is a point upon which it is sensitively jealous, as it is obvious that it cannot acknowledge its obligation to the Scriptures either directly or remotely for its possession of the true principles of morals, without virtual suicide.

Its political creed is red-republicanism. In short. Secularism may be broadly defined as an attention to the things of this world as exclusive of any attention, however slight, to the things of the world to come. It has its own anticipated millennium—its "good time coming" which it confidently expects to realize through inventions, discoveries, an improved statute-book, the diffusion of knowledge respecting man's physical organization, its constitution and laws, and acquaintance with literature of every kind except religious. These and such as these are the means which the prophets of Secularism (for *it* too has its prophets) vaunt as the sovereign remedies for all the ills and grievances under which humanity suffers. This will suffice to show what Secularism professes to be, and aims to accomplish.

2. And now let us turn to Christianity. Mr. Shackleton informs us that Christianity ought to be the same in every age, and yet, (as we suppose) in the excess of his charity he is willing to compare Secularism with *modern Christianity*, that is, with a development which he declares to be superior to that of any previous era. In the name of Christianity we decline to accept his insolent generosity, and maintain that Christianity has been the same *substantially* in every age. It may serve the purpose of Mr. S. to apply the term Christianity to everything which has presumed to wear the name, as it might serve the purpose of a man who was anxious to bring *honesty* into contempt to apply the word *honest* to every rogue who, with a countenance of apparent *sincerity*, had cheated his fellows: but as there

would be the principle of honesty, and this principle would be a good one, even though *all* who pretend to it were the most despicable vagabonds; even so there is such a religion as Christianity and that religion a good one, though there should not be a single Christian among the vast multitudes who usurp its sacred name.

What then is Christianity? As its name imports it has something to do with Christ, just as Owenism has something to do with Robert Owen. Now as we should try any professed adherent of Owenism by his book of "The New Moral World," a book which was dedicated to King William IV. with this motto prefixed, "Sacred to truth, without mystery, mixture of error, or fear of man," and as we should deny the appellation Owenite to any man, whatever his professions, who should differ on *fundamental* points from that book; so we try any professed adherent of Christianity by the book which contains the principles of Christianity, and we deny the appellation *Christian* to any man, whatever his professions, who differs on *fundamental* points from the Bible. I put it to your candour and your common sense, whether this appeal to the book in both cases is not fair, and whether the man, who, in his public declamations, finds it convenient constantly to overlook the distinction between a system and the professors of that system, is not to be suspected either of gross and contemptible dishonesty, or of mental weakness hardly superior to the most drivelling idiocy. Mr. Shackleton may choose that horn of the dilemma which will best contribute to his comfort and reputation.

I repeat it, then, Christianity has something to do with Christ, and hence, it behoves us to trace the system backwards and upwards to its historical origin. This origin we do not find in the *last* century. We go farther back, and still the stream is too wide and deep to allow the suspicion that we are near its source. Aided by the world's literature, we travel on from century to century, until we arrive at the third of the Christian era. Still the stream is too wide and deep to have suddenly sprung up there and then. We come to the second, and yet we are beckoned on to an earlier period if we wish to discover the wonderful fountain-head from which this gigantic river has emanated. As we ascend to the first century, we are conscious that our investigations are coming to a termination by the fewer number of Christians and the diminished amount of Christian literature; and, at length, we meet with the four gospels and the epistles from which the main facts in that Christian literature had been derived, and which had been declared to be inspired and authoritative. These gospels and epistles contain an account of the origin of Christianity, and an explicit statement both of its doctrines and their associated duties. They were written soon after the events which they relate transpired, and consequently, when, had they been a tissue of falsehoods, it would have been abundantly easy to overthrow them. And that which it would have been so easy to do, self-interest would have constrained the implicated parties to accomplish.

The New Testament then contains the origin and

explains the nature of Christianity. Now mark; it is not here necessary for me to affirm the things contained in this New Testament to be true. I believe them, but I can afford at the present stage of the argument to forego the assumption. What, however, I *do* affirm is this—that whether the facts narrated in the gospels are true or false, and whether the doctrines and precepts grounded on them in the epistles, are true or false, these facts together with the doctrines and precepts constitute Christianity as it exists in the book, and the belief and practice of them, constitute Christianity as it exists in the life. It is readily admitted that a diversity of opinions on some minor matters is perfectly consistent with the Christianity of the men who are thus slightly at variance. But it should never be forgotten that there are certain facts and doctrines which cannot be rejected, and certain precepts which cannot be habitually disobeyed without involving the man in the charge both of heresy and ungodliness. Among the principal facts peculiar to Christianity are the Incarnation of Jesus Christ—his holy life—his divinity—his atoning death—his resurrection from the grave—his ascension into heaven. These are facts which cannot be rejected either in whole or in part, without the surrender of all claim to the name Christian; for not only are they implicitly stated again and again in various parts of the New Testament, but they generally form the prominent subjects of discourse to the apostles, when, in some fresh town, they publish the chief elements of that religion which they had received in charge for the world.

The Apostle Paul would have refused the appellation Christian to all who should have openly abjured any one of the facts just stated. And it is worthy of your special consideration that even Mr. Shackleton himself virtually excludes the Unitarians from the pale of Christianity, and we may well ask him how he justifies his conduct, unless it be upon the ground that they repudiate certain doctrines which he finds in the New Testament, that is, certain doctrines which enter into the essence of Christianity. Now the Unitarians resolutely claim to be considered Christians. Therefore, out of his own mouth Mr. Shackleton is condemned, for he admits that all are not Christians who claim to be such, and that, in order to find Christianity, we must have recourse to that book which is termed the Word of God. What then can he mean by *modern* Christianity?

Mr. Shackleton loves to expatiate on the manifold divisions that obtain among the professors of Christianity; but, when he has excluded the Socinians, to what do the differences which then remain amount? It, of course, comports well with his purpose to multiply and aggravate these differences as much as possible: but his representations would be none the worse, if they were somewhat more truthful; and this they might easily be. The broadest divergence which remains, is marked by the words Protestantism and Roman Catholicism; while the distinctions of sect under the former term are, for the most part, of a superficial and incidental character. There are Episcopalians and Presbyterians, and Independents and Baptists, and Quakers and Methodists

of various species; but so far from its being true that they hurl curses at each other, every man who is not wilfully blind must know that, while defending at times with needless and injudicious warmth their distinctive points, they concede to each other the name and the character of Christians. In fact, their differences are utterly insignificant, when compared with those which subsist among the secularists themselves, and even with those which are found in the same secularist within the space of a few months or years. For whereas the "Book of the New Moral World" was affirmed by its author to be infallible, and he was, in consequence, the Pope of Infidelity, his followers, and especially Mr. Holyoake, have changed their opinions with such rapidity that they have been like dissolving views, defying all attempts to ascertain their precise outlines. Nay, we may go even further and say, that while in the person of their socialist founder they started with infallibility, they have come, at length, to account it as redounding to their honour that they have so many metamorphoses. They dignify such caprices with the name of "developments," developments which mark the progress of their system towards perfection. Well, let them have the name; but since these developments succeed each other with such marvellous speed, let us wait, at least, till the last development is seen, before we intrust ourselves to the guidance of Secularism. A guide who, by the continued shiftings of his course, shows that he is ignorant of the way himself, may, if he choose, risk his own neck and life, but I must be

pardoned if I stop and refuse to follow him an inch further.

We have as yet, however, only referred to the chief facts and doctrines of Christianity. It is not only a system of facts and doctrines, it has its precepts, which, after the terrible maledictions which Mr. Shackleton has hurled at the moral tendency and effects of this religion, it may seem hazardous in me to state and defend. But I have no alternative. And let it be remembered that the moral injunctions of Christianity are, in the New Testament, uniformly connected with the facts and doctrines to which I have referred. Man is to *do* certain things, *because he believes in certain things*. His faith in Christ is to be manifested by the avoidance of one line of conduct, and the adoption of another: and the apostles tell us that wherever this faith really exists, it will inevitably produce a distaste to wickedness, and a love of all that is pure and good. The Corinthians were specially mentioned as illustrations of the great moral revolution which Christianity had effected in their hearts and lives. The deeds they had committed before they heard of Christ and believed on him, were from that time abandoned. Now mark, I do not here affirm that the things which the apostles preached to the Corinthians and other Pagans, and which wrought such wonderful results were *facts*. But I say that, whether facts or not, such results they *did* produce, and do produce, wherever they are cordially embraced; and wherever the like effects are not seen in any professed follower of Christ, we are warranted in charging him either with insincerity or *self-delusion*.

Nor am I disposed to allow Mr. S. to play the trick which has been so long a favourite manœuvre among his party, viz., to separate the ethics of Christianity from its asserted facts and doctrines. They stand or they fall together. The duties inculcated in the New Testament are the natural fruit of faith in the doctrines—the fruit of that love and gratitude which is begotten in the soul by the belief that Christ has "loved us and given himself for us."

And what are some of the principal precepts of this religion which the Secularists are seeking to expel from the world? It has its precepts for children, "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Honour thy father and thy mother, which is the first commandment with promise."

It has its precepts for parents, "Ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath, but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."

It has its precepts for husbands, "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ loved the church and gave himself for it." And again, "Husbands, love your wives and be not bitter against them." And again, "Ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour to the wife as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life."

It has its precepts for wives, "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord."

It has its precepts for servants, "Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart as unto Christ; not with eye-service as men-

pleasers, but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart."

It has its precepts for masters, to which I beg your special attention, as the Word of God has been wantonly and malignantly assailed by many as contributing its influence to the support of despotism, by taking sides with masters against their servants. Now mark its language. "Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal, knowing that ye also have a master in heaven." This is the despotism of the Bible.

And again, in allusion to those masters who acquire wealth through injustice, an apostle writes, "Go to now, ye rich men, weep and wail for your miseries which shall come upon you; your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten, your gold and silver is cankered, and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days. Behold the hire of the labourers who have reaped down your fields, which is by you kept back by fraud crieth; and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth." This is the despotism of the Bible.

And again, God by the mouth of one of his prophets says, "Woe unto him that buildeth his house by unrighteousness and his chambers by wrong, that useth his neighbour's service without wages and giveth him not for his work; that saith, I will build me a wide house and large chambers, and cutteth him *out windows*, and it is ceiled with cedar and painted

with vermilion. Shalt thou reign because thou closest thyself in cedar? Did not thy father eat and drink, and do judgment and justice, and then it was well with him? He judged the cause of the poor and needy, then it was well with him. Was not this to know me, saith the Lord?"

This is the despotism of the Bible. I will leave my hearers, be they Christian or Secularist, to judge how far Mr. Shackleton is entitled to their respect as a trustworthy man, when in the face of such passages as these, he can boldly affirm that Christianity is inimical to the interests of the working-classes. It would not be a bad exercise for Mr. Shackleton, if he would take the trouble, to read the Scriptures before he ventures to pronounce judgment upon them, as a man is none the worse for having some acquaintance with the subject upon which he presumes to instruct others. To one or other of the two charges of culpable ignorance or wanton dishonesty he has the alternative of pleading guilty; but either constitutes an effectual disqualification for the office of an enlightener of his fellow-men, as the dogmatism of his assertions is commonly in the inverse ratio of their truth.

I must not occupy more time in the citation of Christian precepts, but conclude this part of my lecture by reminding the audience of the general truth I have been seeking to impress upon you, viz., that by Christianity we mean the facts, doctrines and precepts which are found in the Scriptures and especially in the New Testament.

II. We shall now proceed to a comparison of

Christianity and Secularism, confining ourselves more especially to what is commonly urged in favour of the latter and against the former.

1. We shall compare their respective statements concerning man's responsibilty or irresponsibility for his belief.

We shall hear Mr. Shackleton as he oracularly enounces the following dogma. "I tell you plainly, there is not a man in this room that can believe as he likes. His belief exists independently of him; he has no more power over it than he has over the colour of his hair or the height of his stature. Let any man in this room try to believe that this candle is not burning, can he do it? He can do no such thing. His belief is forced upon him by the evidence which is brought to bear on his mind, and by the peculiar constitution brought into the world with him, being enabled to balance and weigh that evidence."

Now there is just enough of truth in these statements to give them plausibility and to secure for them a ready entrance into many minds, and yet a flimsier sophism, though supported by no less an authority than Lord Brougham, never obtained even a precarious footing among thinking men. The point to be established is this—Is man responsible for his belief? This question resolves itself into a prior one, namely, Has a man any influence or control over the formation of his opinions? If the negative can be successfully established, if it can be shown that man has no more power over his faith than he *has* over the colour of his skin, why then, by all

means let the conclusion go unchallenged that he is not responsible for his belief or unbelief.

Let it be granted with all cheerfulness and readiness that there are cases in which it is perfectly true, that a man's belief is not under the regulation of his will. For instance, a man cannot but believe that the sun is risen when it is shining full in his eyes, and oppressing him with its burning heat; and he cannot avoid disbelieving that it has risen when he is surrounded with darkness and all the signs of midnight. A man cannot but believe that it is winter when the sun hastens to the south, and the trees are leafless, and the rivers are congealed in solid ice, and the mountain tops and valleys are covered thick with snow; and he cannot believe that it is winter when the gentle south wind blows, and the birds are on the wing and filling the heavens and groves with their melodies, and the trees are smiling with blossom or laden with summer fruit. In these and kindred cases, cases in which the sort of evidence which is required is that which appeals to the senses, and in which none of the moral feelings have any opportunity to come into play, it is granted at once that where the evidence is, belief must follow, and that where evidence is *not*, belief *cannot* follow. But surely it ought not to be forgotten that by far the greater part of our knowledge, and the evidence on which we receive it, is not of that kind which comes through the senses, and that man's moral feelings are not always in the same state of quietude as when he is looking at the scenery of nature. A man's prejudices, and temper, and passions are not roused

and challenged when he is merely called upon to believe that it is *winter*, when he sees it is winter, or to believe that it is not winter, when he sees it is summer.

But it must be kept constantly in view that man has a mind of most complex structure—a mind which has intellect, conscience, affections, passions, which, though they may be viewed apart for the sake of analysis, seldom act in isolation from each other. It is not an easy thing for a man to command his feelings to slumber while his intellect weighs and investigates evidence? Nor is it desirable that he should be able to do this, if only he can be assured that those feelings are in sympathetic harmony with truth. But is it not clear that when this harmony does not happen to exist, when from some causes or other his feelings lie on the wrong side, his judgment is in danger of being warped by their influence?

Laying the subject of religion out of the question for a moment, who of you does not know that the wise men in every age who have been instructors of youth, have uniformly prefaced their teachings and intermingled with them cautions against allowing the operation of passion, prejudice or pride to interfere with an honest search after truth? Nay, more, are you not daily witnesses of the fact that almost any amount of evidence can be nullified and overborne by the most improper feelings? If you should chance to have conceived a strong prejudice against a man, is it not generally thought a hopeless experiment to attempt to produce in your minds a conviction of his excel-*lence; and,* on the other hand, if a counter-prejudice

in his favour should exist within your breast, is not the task about as hopeless of convincing you that he is the reverse of what you believe him? Do you not find it to be your daily experience from conversation with others, that on account of the influence of some passion the legitimate force of evidence is most seriously destroyed, and that if by some means you could succeed in either removing that passion from their breast or lulling it to sleep, the evidence which they have resisted, would have been more than sufficient to have produced the fullest conviction? Are we very sanguine of success when we attempt to convince a man of the evil of a practice to which he is wedded; or the dishonesty of a trade by which he is rising rapidly into wealth and distinction? Is not the passion of self-interest found too strong for the logic of evidence?

I need not wait for a reply. You all know full well that the questions now asked embody facts which are meeting with hourly illustration and proof. The shortest acquaintance with men and things will suffice to put you in possession of this fact, that it is easy to convince the judgment of a man when his feelings are already won over; while it is next to impossible to get at his judgment, so long as it is surrounded by a whole phalanx of prejudices and lusts.

Now in such cases, let me ask, do we feel ourselves called upon to present such an amount of evidence as to compel a man to believe; and do we allow him to throw the blame of his unbelief upon the want of sufficient evidence, when in fact he will not open his

eyes to see that which is already placed before him? I trow not. We rather say, the evidence is *there*—it is evidence that has convinced thousands and millions—evidence which has been deemed sufficient by minds the most careful and scrutinizing—and, if you will only look into your own heart, you will find there what it is which obstructs your faith and leaves you in unbelief. To furnish evidence which shall be enough to induce belief when the judgment is open to conviction, without any unlawful and blinding influence of the feelings, we are reasonably compelled; but to furnish evidence which shall overpower the strongest fortifications of passion which man can erect, is neither the province of God nor man.

Why, so far from its being true that a man has no power over his belief, and is not responsible for it, there is hardly a nation on the face of the earth which has not its proverbs expressive of just the opposite sentiment. Of this kind are "The wish is parent to the thought;" "None is so blind as he that will not see;" "What a man wishes, he believes." What do such proverbs mean, but that men may suffer themselves to be so influenced by improper feelings that they will not see the evidence which is actually present to their minds? A person is desirous of holding a certain doctrine—this desire leads him to read only what is written on one side—he closes one eye, and consequently sees only the evidence which comes within the scope of vision; and then he declares that he has seen nothing with the other eye, and that the evidence which he has seen constrains him to believe what he does believe.

Very likely—but let such a person remember that he is responsible for every step of the investigation—that he is responsible for not having opened the other eye—that he is responsible for not having seen more evidence, and different evidence—that he is responsible for allowing feeling to interfere with the legitimate search for evidence—and that therefore he is responsible for his belief. Mr. Shackleton assumes that man has a natural desire for truth of every kind, and that there are no internal and culpable circumstances which would induce a man to dislike evidence. But every one knows that there are such things in the world as unwelcome truths, against the belief of which a man will take every possible precaution; and in taking such precaution he is doing violence to his moral nature which will render him amenable to God.

But I have not yet done with Mr. Shackleton in connexion with this point. I trust I have demonstrated with sufficient cogency the responsibility of of man for his belief, and therefore the fallacy of the secularist philosophy. But I must further request your attention to the gross inconsistencies which are found to exist between Mr. Shackleton's principles and his conduct. What does he lay down as an unassailable truth? That man is no more responsible for his belief than he is for the colour of his hair or the height of his stature. What would you expect from a man who vaunted his adherence to such a principle? Would you not expect that he would speak of all who differ from him, whether in religion or politics, in the language of the tenderest commis-

eration, pitying them for their ignorance, and seeking to present to their minds such evidence as he says when seen, must irresistibly compel their belief? To treat them thus would only be the natural consequence of the dogma that man is not responsible for his opinions because he has no power over their formation. But instead of exhibiting this spirit, (the only spirit consistent with his creed,) he scatters his burning bolts of envenomed accusation in the most indiscriminate manner, charging whole bodies of men with deliberate attempts to keep the people in ignorance and subjection, to get rich and powerful at their expense, and thus to defraud for ever the largest portion of mankind of their natural rights. They become bloated with the gains of their dishonesty and tyranny, and dread the diffusion of education, lest it should hasten the day of their decline and ruin .

Now on the supposition that the men who are thus severely and violently assailed are honest in their convictions, is it not manifest that they do not deserve censure but pity from Mr. S., who has thrown over them his ample theoretic shield of irresponsibility for their opinions? But he will seek to escape the inconsistency by refusing to accord to them credit for honesty, and he will accuse them of being actuated solely by selfish impulses and aims. There is alas! no refuge for him, for with singular infatuation he has cut off all chance of retreat by his unqualified affirmation of the doctrine of circumstances, that "man's character is made for him and not by him." This being the case, not only is man

not responsible for his belief, but he is not responsible for his actions. Whatever he does he is compelled to do by circumstances over which he has no control. Hear this, ye slaveholders—ye despots, whether kingly or mercantile—ye that get rich by oppression and robbery—ye that trade in blood, that waylay the quiet traveller or break open peaceful dwellings to rob and murder—Mr. S. frees you from blame by his accommodating theory, that you act under the compulsion of circumstances. But do not thank him too hastily for his marvellous benevolence, for no sooner has he assured you that you cannot help doing what you do, than he begins to pelt you with the most violent abuse. He first begs most kindly to inform you, that you are slaves to circumstances, and then flogs you for it. These are the tender mercies of Secularism.

But human nature refuses to be satisfied with such a philosophy. There is within the breast of every man—yes within that of Mr. S. the undestroyed and indestructible consciousness of freedom with its consequent responsibility. No logic which is based on the mutilated facts of our moral nature —no logic which is based on the repudiation of the solemn and infallible testimony of consciousness to the fact of our liberty—no logic which thus virtually annihilates personality and co-ordinates man with the material creation, by subjecting him to the overmastering power of ordinary causation, can succeed in producing and perpetuating the conviction that we are not responsible for belief and action. Subtle argumentation may, with the stoic, demon-

strate the impossibility of motion—with the intellectual sceptic, the non-existence of matter and of mind—with the moral sceptic, the doctrine of necessarianism, but under all this refined speculation the truth is heard, as it rises from the unshaken centre of our hearts. Men may reason their way to the logical conclusion that man is *not free*—their actual *belief* and *conviction* even when standing upon the very inference of their syllogism, is that man *is free*.

This feeling lies at the foundation of the emotion of remorse, which rises in the soul on the recollection of some committed wrong. What is it which frequently haunts the murderer by day and by night, which drives sleep from his eyes or fills his dreams with horrible spectres, which makes him tremble at the rustling of a leaf, which as in the case of the man just condemned at York, torments him until he delivers himself into the hands of justice? It is not the fear of discovery, for he discovers himself. It is the consciousness that he has perpetrated a horrible deed, against sacred moral laws, and against the Being that appointed them, and that in perpetrating the deed, he has done what he ought not to have done, and what he could have avoided doing. It is this very conviction that he was free to have avoided it, which now constitutes the bitterness of his anguish. Only convince him that he was not free, that he was but an instrument in the iron hand of circumstances, and you at once deliver him from his self-accusations—but you do more—you deliver him from the fear of committing the like iniquity *again*. Enlightened by Mr. Shackleton's philosophy,

he is relieved of all scruples, and whenever he finds it convenient for the attainment of his own ends to seize the knife, and murder the objects of his jealousy and envy, he may do it with all possible complacency, casting the blame upon circumstances. Whether there be a God or not, I think it becomes the inhabitants of this neighbourhood to cherish a jealous dread of the diffusion of such principles as these, since they do not seem well calculated to promote either the security of your property or your lives.

Christianity on the other hand, respects the moral feelings of our nature, and seeks to purify and elevate them. It gives conspicuous prominence to the will, and reminds man that while it is true that circumstances have an influence on the will, the will has an equal if not a greater influence over circumstances. It constantly appeals to him as a free agent, accuses him for having perverted that freedom and exhorts him to yield to those influences which have been appointed for his complete moral restoration. It assures us that we are all subjects of a great moral governor to whom we are amenable, and before whom we must one day stand. Whether a system, which thus corresponds with our own nature, confirms the testimony of consciousness itself as to the fact of freedom, and throws over every action the sacredness of accountability to God; or one which converts man into a machine, classes him with water-wheels which *must* revolve when water falls upon them—I say whether of these two systems is truer in philosophy, and whether is better

calculated to advance the morality and the happiness of man, I leave to the judgment of this audience, convinced that even the secularists themselves who may have been hoodwinked by the positive statements of Mr. S. will in their hearts acknowledge that the palm of truthfulness must be yielded to Christianity. Here we must leave our first point of comparison, which is:—the respective teachings of Christianity and Secularism, concerning man's responsibility or irresponsibility for his opinions and actions.

2. The next point to which we solicit your attention is closely allied with the one just considered, but is of sufficient importance to merit separate treatment—I mean the different estimate which is formed of the dignity of men by *Secularism* and *Christianity*.

And here I might enter into a comparison of the accounts which they respectively give of his origin. This, however, must be very summarily dismissed. Suffice it to say that the secularists are terribly perplexed with the problem of man's existence. They have tried to account for his origin without yielding to the necessity of believing in a God. No explanation has been too contemptible to offer as a subterfuge from the admission of a personal Deity. Some have been disposed to affirm that he never had a beginning, that there has been an eternal series of men, but alas! geology arose and ground this opinion to powder, so that now they are heartily ashamed of it and trust it may never be mentioned again. Then they betook themselves to what they are pleased to term the development-theory, and rather than believe in a God, *they* would go to the oyster and say, "Thou art my

father and my mother." Unfortunately for this theory, though it is very common for men to eat oysters, it is not quite so common a thing for oysters to grow up into men. With vexatious obstinacy, (however anxious the secularists are to find one oyster thus becoming human,) the oysters will persist in remaining oysters and will never open until they are forced, and then they will not come out to walk and talk like men, but to be swallowed. But I understand that Mr. Shackleton is quite ashamed of this theory too, and is solicitous to vindicate his title to a nobler origin. Well, what is it? Whence has come this physical frame which is a source of constant and increasing wonder to anatomists and physiologists on account of its innumerable adaptations? Whence has it come? He has no answer, or when sore pressed, he will, in the face of its infinite, its complex, yet harmonions adaptations, rather believe that it made itself or sprung from chance than that God created it. The difference on this point between Mr. Shackleton and myself is briefly this:—that he believes in adaptations without an adapter, and I believe that where there are adaptations there *must be* an adapter. He is very welcome to the superiority of wisdom which his belief may merit, but I would recommend to him the remark of an ancient heathen who wrote thus before Christianity came into the world. "He that can gaze at the world and not believe in a God that created and designed it, had better not believe in the world at all."

Leaving Mr. Shackleton, however, in all the philosophical complacency which he can derive from

believing in an effect which has no adequate cause, I must proceed to the point under review—the different estimates which are formed of the dignity of man by *Secularism* and *Christianity*, and the natural moral tendency of such estimate.

And here I must beg to remind you of the twofold aspect of Secularism, according as it positively denies the immortality of man, or gives no judgment on the matter, doubting whether there is an after-life or not.

On the first supposition man is a mere animal-machine composed of matter—he has no mind distinct from his body—his mind being simply the result of organization. It is the body that thinks, that reasons, that imagines, that wills. In fact, man is nothing but blood, bones, flesh and electricity. Now, I am not going to argue against this doctrine of materialism. It were easy to demonstrate its absurdity, but I have only to take it as it is, and see what are its natural results. It brings man down to the level of the brutes. When he dies, he dies like a dog and is done with for ever. Now whatever has a tendency to divest any object of its reputed value, has a proportionate tendency to awaken towards it a feeling of disregard and contempt. We respect a thing which in our eyes is of great worth—our respect diminishes with our diminished apprehension of that worth. Lower my conceptions of man's nature, capacities and destinies, you lower my conceptions of everything about him. While I regard him as possessing a soul transcending in value all worlds, I am supremely anxious for his moral restoration that he may be fitted for the world beyond the

grave. Whatever he does and whatever is done to to him is of vast importance. But tell me and convince me that this is all a delusion, that he is only a refined monkey or little more, that his only life is on this side of the grave, and my interest in his welfare must suffer sudden and tremendous abatement.

In the language of Robert Hall, (substituting the word *secularist* for the word sceptic): "To extinguish human life by the hand of violence, must be quite a different thing in the eyes of a secularist from what it is in those of a Christian. With the secularist it is nothing more than diverting the course of a little red fluid called blood; it is merely lessening the number by one of many millions of fugitive, contemptible creatures. The Christian sees in the same event, an accountable being cut off from a state of probation and hurried, perhaps unprepared, into the presence of his Judge, to hear that final, that irrevocable sentence, which is to fix him for ever in an unalterable condition of felicity or woe. The former perceives nothing in death but its physical circumstances; the latter is impressed with the magnitude of its moral consequences."

Such being the case, I will leave even the secularists themselves to judge into the hands of which of these two men they would prefer to fall—the man who accounts himself and his fellows as but animals which may slay each other without any fear of retribution hereafter, or the man who invests life with an inviolable sacredness, and who, in addition to being actuated by the highest moral principles, is restrained from the commission of such a crime by the antici-

pation of a judgment-seat. Will it be replied that the secularists hold that a man ought not to commit crime, because it is *wrong* to do so, without any consideration either of his intrinsic dignity or the consequences of his action? I answer,

1. What have the secularists to do with *right* and *wrong*? They ought never to use the words, for is it not abundantly obvious that there neither can be right nor wrong to those who hold the doctrine of circumstances. If a man be the unresisting victim of an over-mastering necessity, there can be no difference (morally considered) between benevolence and malevolence, between truth and falsehood, between honesty and dishonesty. The secularists have no more right to apply the term virtue and vice to human action than to the movements of a steam-engine. For them, therefore, to say, that a man ought not to commit a crime because it is *wrong* to do so, is to contradict their own philosophy, and to acknowledge, on this point, the truth of Christianity.

2. But, even though we should refuse to press this objection, still the man who believes in a future state, who anticipates a day of judgment, and who lives under the influences of such anticipation, is far more likely to be a good member of society than he who looks to the grave as his final abode. Many a secularist, under the influence of passion, having first expelled from his mind a fear of the world to come and a judgment, has committed the crime of murder, a crime which he would not have committed had he felt those restraining influences. The extinction of *man's sense* of his moral obligations to God and of his

conviction that there is a bar at which he must stand, is the first step (when the occasion shall be offered,) to a scene of anarchy and bloodshed, such as atheism precipitated in France at the close of the eighteenth century.

There is, however, another species of secularist we must not overlook—the man who does not *absolutely deny the being* of a God and a future state, but who is in doubt as to both of them. His language is, "I dare not say there is not a God; in fact I think he is a fool who is so bold as to declare this, and I dare not say that there is not a future state; but I have not yet seen evidence which irresistibly forces me to believe in them. I think it quite possible that I may have something more than a body, which will exist in another state, and that I may have to meet God, but I am not certain."

Well, and let me ask such an one, if he be present, what influence has this doubt upon your heart and life? Instead of living as a man ought to live who admits that there *may be* such tremendous realities, you live as if you had obtained the most certain information that no such realities existed. Your doctrine is, "I do not know that a God exists"—your practical inference is, "therefore, I will live as if I were *certain* that he did not *exist*." Is inconsistency the cardinal virtue of Secularism? Is it a royal principle with this enlightened system, never to yield to the influence of anything less than absolute certainty? Have you risen above the vulgar weakness of those who act on probabilities? Is it thus you are found to conduct yourselves with reference to the affairs of

the present life? Do you never prepare against anything unless you are *sure* it will happen? Doubtless, if you were merchants and had vessels to transport your goods to foreign climes, you would not commit the folly of insuring them, because you could not be certain that the vessel would be leaky, or strike upon the rock, or be capsized, or be smitten with lightning, or be set on fire. If you were manufacturers, you would never insure your mill, for though some accident *might* befal it, yet it *might not*, and therefore you would act as if confident that the mill were perfectly safe. You never lock your doors for fear of robbers, for you have received no *certain* intelligence that any attack is meditated against your property and life. You scorn to be connected with money-clubs, which shall supply you with help in seasons of sickness, for you may die suddenly without sickness. You smile; yes, and a very significant smile it is. It means that I am giving you credit for greater consistency than you can justly claim. Well then, if as a merchant you really would insure your vessels, and as a manufacturer your mill; if you lock your doors like other people, and avail yourselves of the benefits of money-clubs; if you prepare not only against probabilities but possibilities, yes, and sometimes against things which are never likely to happen; if you do all this under the sanction of a manifest and justifiable prudence, can such prudence have no place in relation to the world to come? To denominate that conduct wisdom which, while admitting the possibility of the existence of both God *and the future* state, is marked by no corresponding

earnestness of life, is fearfully to abuse human language. To trifle with such possibilities and to make them matters for jesting, evinces a disposition which I forbear to characterize.

3. Let us now view Christianity and Secularism in the influence they respectively exert over man's present interests.

It has been a common theme of declamation among secularists that an attention to the things of the life to come is incompatible with a due regard to the interests of the present life—that it distracts thought, divides energy, and thus robs the present interests of the race of all the good they would derive from an exclusive consecration to them. The secularists have somehow or other suddenly acquired a particular affection for Christians, and are afraid that in caring for the things of eternity they may lose the things of time, and thus their whole existence may be utterly abortive. Now, the Apostle Paul informs us that "godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." Mr. Shackleton, with his usual modesty, begs to differ from the Apostle on this point. Let the appeal, however, be again made to facts—facts whose stubbornness is proverbial. According to this favourite theory of Secularism, we should naturally look around and confidently expect that Christians would be all, or nearly all, servants, and Secularists masters—Christians poor and Secularists rich—Christians thriftless, and Secularists men of enterprise—Christians ignorant of everything in the shape of art, science, history and other species of

knowledge, and the Secularists quite up to the mark on all these topics. We should expect every subscription list for a benevolent purpose to be headed by Secularists; that they would be in the front of every worthy enterprise both with head, heart, hand, tongue and money, and that the last class of individuals to whom recourse would be had for help in everything great and good would be the Christians, who, because they attend to the concerns of eternity, must be almost worthless in reference to all the concerns of time. Why, impostors themselves could tell Mr. Shackleton a very different tale, for it is to the religious world they uniformly go for practical sympathy, knowing that they have the surest chance of success in laying their case before men whose hearts Christianity has softened, and whose hands, in many cases, Christianity has filled, by teaching them habits of honesty and unwearying industry. We have often heard of the benevolence of a Christian public, but the benevolence of a secularist public is an anomaly we have yet to meet with for the first time. Every one here must know that this secularist theory is strangely at war with the facts of the case, and that Christians possess, at least an average share, of all the things that pertain to the present life. Christians have been our principal statesmen—Christians have been our principal judges—Christians have been our principal scholars—Christians have been our principal philosophers—Christians have been our principal poets—Christians have been our principal merchants—Christians have been our principal manufacturers—and Christians have been the

founders and principal supporters of nearly all the noble institutions of our land. No honest man will deny these facts, and no honest man can reconcile these facts with the notable doctrine of Secularism, that religion distracts a man's attention from the affairs of the present life. So far from this it teaches a man to view even this life as sacred—to fulfil all the duties which arise out of his relationships to it, but to fulfil them from new and loftier motives. He is not to cease from any lawful study, labour or enterprise, but he is to do all to the glory of God. He is commanded to be dilligent in business, but to associate this with fervency of spirit and the service of Christ. I have known Christianity make many an idle man diligent; I have known it awake many a slumbering intellect, and fill many a soul with a passion for knowledge—I have known it to be the prime impulse which has conducted men from obscurity to eminent usefulness, but the opposite effects I never knew it produce. Secularism, then, is at fault in its third accusation against Christianity, but I suppose that it is deemed an honourable feature in this new gospel of infidelity to be in sublime independence of all facts. There is reason for apprehension that, however this characteristic might contribute to a speedy secularist millennium in Utopia, it will be an insurmountable barrier to the arrival of such an epoch, in a world where theories are accounted none the less truthful if they repose on the impregnable basis of facts.

4. Secularism charges Christianity with an immoral tendency because of the doctrine of the atonement.

This is an ancient, and by this time ought to have been an antiquated and obsolete objection to this essential doctrine of Christianity. Mr. Shackleton says, "The atonement to my mind is a mischievous doctrine in society, and not a good one." If he had established this assertion by a citation of facts, I should have appeared here this evening to recant my faith in the gospel, for that which is intrinsically mischievous cannot be from God. But, as usual, Mr. Shackleton is strong only in assertion. He does not even *attempt* to sustain this malignant calumny. What, let me ask, are the mischievous effects to which he refers? Has the doctrine of the atonement turned any honest man into a thief? any truthful man into a liar? any sober man into a drunkard? any diligent man into an idler? any chaste man into an adulterer or fornicator? It has been preached to the inhabitants of barbarous climes who were found in naked savageism, perpetrating all the crimes which it is possible for the heart of man to conceive, and this "mischievous" doctrine has raised them from their deep dejection, has supplanted hatred by love, and has been the herald of the arts of civilized life. For many years, Dr. Chalmers tried by every means in his power to reform the character and habits of the people of Kilmany, in Scotland, but without the slightest success, until he began at length to preach in all its fulness the "mischievous" doctrine of the atonement, and at once a marvellous transformation began to be effected throughout the whole neighbourhood. And, indeed, there is hardly a Christian *church* in this country, which has not in connection

with it one or more individuals who from a notoriously wicked life were converted to habits of truth and purity by this "mischievous" doctrine. Never was their heart softened, never did they loathe sin, never did they begin to see the beauty of virtue until they heard of the love of Christ as displayed in his atonement for them. This is the doctrine they grasp with the greatest firmness, and of which they speak with highest rapture, the doctrine which they find to be the strongest restraint in the hour of temptation. He who has believed in Christ, has seen in his sufferings for us such a demonstration at once of his wondrous love and of the enormity of sin, as not only to awaken love in his breast for his Saviour, but hatred to the sin which occasioned his fearful agonies. Hence, instead of the atonement fostering the habits of sin, it brings to bear against it the most powerful motives, in fact, the only motives which can effectually dislodge it from the soul. "The love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge that if Christ died for all, then were all dead; and that he died for all that they who live should not henceforth live to themselves, but to him that died for them and rose again." "Be not deceived," says the Apostle Paul, "neither fornicator, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you." Well, and how had they been delivered from such abominable sins? By the "mischievous" doctrine of the atone-

ment. "But ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God." And I am bold to say that wherever the atonement is sincerely believed, wherever a man's heart yields to this appeal of divine love, high moral results are produced which no other motives can secure. Here, then, is a "mischievous" doctrine which works no mischief, nay, which with all the regularity of a law accomplishes the most perfect reformation which the principles and practice of a man can undergo. "If the moral world is so strange a region that men do really gather grapes of thorns and figs of thistles," that they draw from "a bitter fountain sweet water"—if (to speak without a figure,) a "mischievous" doctrine diffuses such manifold blessings wherever it is believed, there is room to fear that Mr. Shackleton's "innocent" Secularism may on the same mysterious principle of opposites issue in the most terrible moral disasters. What has it already done? Why, among other things, it has blown at least, two magnificent bubbles, both of which have burst—the Hampshire bubble and the New Lanark bubble. A few years sufficed to see them blown and dissipated. The most beautiful spots were selected for the great experiments which were to demonstrate unanswerably to the world that Secularism is the remedy for "all the ills that flesh is heir to." Mankind were to be soon enraptured with the glorious success of these model communities, and to be conformed to their fashion. But alas! the brightness of the vision was soon destined to fade away.

The new moral world turned out to be a very wretched, immoral affair, and instead of a sweet elysium of liberty, equality and fraternity, it became a Babel of bitterness and confusion, and now the Hampshire settlement is a school, and new Lanark is a small village, which was so deeply impressed with the important benefits of the experiment which it witnessed, that there is not a secularist to be found in it.

As Mr. Shackleton's information regarding the condition of new Lanark may be somewhat ancient, I will read for his especial benefit recent testimony from the very spot, bearing date March 16th, 1853.

"When Robert Owen came to this village he was drawn in his carriage by the people, but when he left it the same individuals were ready to pelt him away. There seems to be only one opinion on the subject, which is, that Owen inflicted a very great evil on the villagers, by instilling into the minds of the children what he called the absurdity of parental restraint, the effects of which were disorder and disunion in families, numbers of illegitimate children, and many other evils following in their train. It has been very difficult for parents to hold the reins of government, but there is a great improvement going on at present. There is not one in the village that professes to believe Owen's creed. There was one, a talented young man who advocated socialist principles, but a few months since he voluntarily came forward and began to subscribe to the Bible Society, and he is now a constant attendant at

the worship of the Independents in the Hall of Science, built by Robert Owen."

If the people of new Lanark were so entranced with secularism, that they will have nothing more to do with it, Mr. Shackleton will be a man of strong faith, if he believe that the system which failed in such favourable circumstances, will ever succeed in any.

Mr. Shackleton alludes to a statement made by myself, viz.—that I do not feel laid under any obligation in all cases to prevent my children from disobeying my commands; and gives a triumphant chuckle, as if he had discovered an insuperable objection to the Christian religion. The circumstances in which this sentiment was uttered are as follow. It had been affirmed by Mr. Robinson that *there could be no God*, for if there were, he would never have permitted evil, and suffering, and injustice. This was declared by the very lips which on the same evening had admitted the possibility of there being a God. It was in reply to this that I made and now repeat the statement just adverted to. The mistake which infidelity commits upon this point is what I have already exposed—the mistake of destroying all moral law and moral agency. It says to God, "Thou shalt not make a free agent—an agent capable of doing right or of doing wrong—thou shalt only make a creature destitute of a will, and thou shalt surround him with such circumstances only as shall irresistibly compel him to do right and to be happy."

Now, in opposition to this, I affirm that man is a

free agent; and I still further affirm, that a free or moral agent is the highest form of creature in the world. The largest amount of happiness is connected with the possession of a will and the right use of it, and such happiness could not be enjoyed by any creature destitute of will. Infidelity, therefore, says, "God shall not make a creature capable of the highest happiness." And why? Because he may possibly abuse his will! But may not the greatest blessing be most abused? Why, upon this principle, there is not a privilege against which the secularist ought not to make unsparing war. The knowledge of chemistry is a good thing; but some chemists may abuse it to poison their fellows; razors are good things for shaving, but they may be abused to the cutting of throats; civil liberty is a good thing, but it may be abused to very uncivil deeds, to thieving, to conspiracy and rebellion, to wholesale bloodshed. It will not, however, be the less true that civil liberty is a good thing, and that the right use of it is connected with the highest happiness of a nation, though it may be abused, and its abuse entails the deepest misery. Thus it is with moral freedom, and to deny to God the right of making a free agent because such liberty may be perverted, is conduct worthy of the wisdom of Secularism.

It is, therefore, in perfect harmony with the justice and benevolence of God to create a free agent, to endow him with reason and will, to place before him courses of action, to present him with motives which are *sufficient* though not *compulsory*, and then

to treat him according to his obedience or disobedience. Thus every reasonable parent deals with his child. He sets him his portion of work for the day, work which he can perform, work which his father might compel him to perform, were he to stand over him all the day with rod in hand, but which the child may refuse to do without compulsion. Does the parent feel himself under obligation to employ such coercion? No, he gives him the work to do, tells him he will expect it to be done, and reminds him of the consequences of neglecting it; and in acting thus he is justified by every principle of humanity.

I have now done with all that is material in Mr. Shackleton's lectures, but I cannot bring this reply to a close without reminding both him and my other secularist hearers of some of the immense and insuperable difficulties which lie at their door the moment they repudiate Christianity. It is common for the opponents of revealed religion in their eagerness to undermine its authority, to cast about for all the objections which a fertile imagination can invent, and this they do with such pertinacity and exclusiveness of purpose as leads them to forget the tremendous difficulties and absurdities which they must swallow, if they decline to believe in the gospel. They demand as a necessary condition of their faith in Christianity what is not demanded as a condition of their faith in any other thing. Nothing else and nothing less will satisfy them than a full and exhaustive answer to all the questions which they may *deem it right* to ask in connection with religion. So

long as you leave one problem unsolved, they will maintain their recusancy, and in the face of the strongest and most manifest evidence will point superciliously at the uncleared difficulty in justification of their perpetuated scepticism. They forget meanwhile, that when on grounds thus rotten and unreasonable they have rejected Christianity, they become suddenly besieged by an army of stubborn and invincible mysteries in comparison with which, those which pertain to the religion of the Bible sink into insignificance. I never affirmed (and I trust that no other Christian advocate has been so ignorant or so incautious as to affirm) that there are no difficulties connected with the gospel. There are many, but, in this respect, the gospel only follows the analogy of all other things, and the man who insists that before he gives in his adherence to any truth or system of truths, every doubt and difficulty which his reason or imagination may conjure up shall be completely dissipated, will go down to the grave, a perfect *vacuum*, believing nothing. Survivors, however, will entertain a pretty strong and unanimous belief about him, and will think they treat his memory with no discourtesy when they call him—*Fool.*

It is not unworthy the candid consideration of the secularists that there is no one department of truth whether ethical or scientific, which is not invested with insoluble difficulties. I may even go further and affirm that there are truths confirmed by uniform and universal experience, which stand in abrupt opposition to all antecedent probabilities—truths,

which, in one sense may be declared unreasonable. Of this kind is the truth connected with the law of cooling—viz.—that while, from the 212th degree down to the 40th, water undergoes increased contraction with increasing coldness, it then begins to expand and to assume the shape of frost which floats on the surface. Now, I say that this is a fact which violates all the anticipations of the human reason—and yet it is a glorious fact on which the well-being of the world depends. No explanation can be given of it, except one which is more mysterious than the mystery it pretends to solve. Reason uncorrected by the scientific fact, would have concluded that if the law of contraction was found invariable from 212 to 40, it might be published as a universal canon applicable to all degrees below 40; and if Mr. Shackleton had been an inhabitant of some distant planet where by all conceivable appliances it was not possible to obtain an intenser cold than 41, I doubt not that in his secularist omniscience and dogmatism, he would have declared me to be a deceiver, if I had informed him during my visit to his distant abode that on earth water expands from the 40th degree. "*Nonsense*," he would have said; "Don't play your tricks on me. We have water here as well as you; and we have thermometers too, and dare you presume to tell me that when water has been contracting for 172 degrees it then begins to expand? No, you are seeking to practise on my simplicity. You see that we cannot obtain a greater degree of cold than 41, and therefore, because I have not the power to test your

statement, you can treat me to a list of marvels. But, sir, we are not to be duped here by any such irrational and impossible things."

I have given this illustration for the purpose of showing that even in the domain of physical science, there are incomprehensible mysteries which we are compelled to believe, and that therefore, it is in the highest degree inconsistent for any man to reject Christianity, because it is not free from difficulties. And yet this is precisely the conduct exhibited by the Secularists. They hate the gospel, and the difficulties they urge as lying in the way of their belief, do not constitute the *defence* of their hatred, but its *excuse*.

Let me however, refer Mr. Shackleton to some difficulties which beset his unbelief, and which, with a most convenient blindness he does not seem to have seen. And

(1.) How does Mr. S. propose to explain or get rid of the *prophecies* of Scripture.

To prophesy is a very dangerous venture, even for the sagacity of a secularist. Robert Owen has by his predictions long ago earned the name of a false prophet, unless he intended them, like Paddy's dreams, "to go by contraries." His followers have been no more successful in their forecastings of the future. Indeed, as I have already said, it is a very perilous thing for a man to prophesy. Almanacs are annual exemplifications of what man can do in this way. They are weather-bibles, and if the Bible against which infidels rail with such vehemence, were one thousandth part as fallacious as these are, I would join in the chorus

of malediction. But its accuracy is its unpardonable sin. It contains prophecies of events, some of which were foretold hundreds of years before they happened, and many of them have been fulfilled with the minutest exactness, while others are yet awaiting their accomplishment. Nineveh, after her sleep of centuries, is now rising from her grave to announce to the world with her marble lips, that "there is a God that judgeth in the earth," who, because of her sins, doomed her to destruction, and who will as surely fulfil every jot and tittle of his word. I suppose that Mr. Shackleton, rather than allow his darling Secularism to be discredited by the discoveries of Dr. Layard, will either endeavour to prove that the works which bear his name are forgeries, or, if this should be a somewhat difficult task, he will assert (nothing so easy) that he has gone to Assyria and there has made the winged bulls, and the slabs with their curious inscriptions, on purpose to gratify the priests and uphold, by false methods, a tottering system! As Mr. S. is fond of novelties, let me recommend this theory to him as quite new; and, as he is ambitious of popularity, the publication of such a theory would extend his fame even to Germany itself—that paradise of secularist dreamers.

Meanwhile, as I am old-fashioned enough to believe in the truths of the Scripture prophecies, I may call upon Mr. Shackleton to read the predictions concerning Babylon, Nineveh, Tyre, Jerusalem and the dispersion of the Jews, and to compare these predictions with their fulfilment, and then let him explain *the coincidences* without recourse to Divine inspiration.

There are two ways of dealing with the somewhat troublesome difficulty. The first is very short and ingenious. It is the flat denial that the prophecies were written before the events to which they relate transpired. If Mr. Shackleton chooses to avail himself of this popular solution, he can have no objection to substantiate his position, or at least to attempt it, for I defy either him or any other man to do more. Nay, further I am prepared to show upon the very principle of historical criticism by which we are enabled to vindicate to Cæsar his commentaries, and to Thucydides his history, that the prophecies were written by the men whose names they bear, and, therefore, written at a time long prior to the predicted events.

The second way will hardly commend itself to my opponent on account of his unfeigned contempt for the Jews. It is that the Jews were the most sagacious people that ever lived, inasmuch, as they could prophesy in the face of the most glaring unlikelihoods, events which were not to transpire for centuries, but which confirmed their respective predictions to the letter. Surely, he will not say that there is nothing at all extraordinary in such accurate foresight. If he do, the audience will be glad to hear one of his prophecies, and it shall be chronicled and duly preserved as Mr. Shackleton's prediction. Mark :—it must be chronicled and preserved—otherwise, if unfortunately there should be a discrepancy between the prophecy and the fact, Mr. Shackleton might endeavour to save his credit by saying that his prediction was conditional, and that he had said,

if such a thing should happen, which depended on such another thing and this on another, then the famous foretold event would come to pass. But there is no condition specified in the ancient prophecies. All is emphatic, unqualified declaration. They were also committed to writing and preserved with sacred care—two precautions which would prove the so-called prophets to be the most arrant fools, if they had spoken and written without the authority of God, and, therefore, without any certainty that their utterances would be verified.

If, then, the former of these ways is assumptive and false, and if the latter is incredible, we are shut up to the conclusion that the prophets were inspired by God.

Accordingly, we conclude that in denying or doubting the being of a God, the secularists are confronted by an insuperable difficulty. As honest men they are compelled to deal fairly with the question of prophecy, and yet they have no method adequate to its solution, but that which is supplied in the existence and Providence of God. And this, of course, involves the surrender of Secularism.

2. Again, How does Mr. Shackleton purpose to get rid of *miracles?*

It is too late in the day for any man who has the slightest pretensions to knowledge to deny the possibility of miracles. The science of geology has established beyond the reach of reasonable controversy the fact that there was a time when man did not exist upon the earth, and, therefore, a time when *a new* creative energy was put forth. This could

have been nothing less than a miracle. And one miracle being established, the credibility of the Scripture miracles depends upon their intrinsic character, the purposes for which they were wrought, and the kind and the degree of evidence by which they were sustained. I am prepared to show that we have the same reasons for believing in the resurrection of Christ and other scripture miracles, that we have for believing in the battle of Cannæ, or the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus; and that the desperate recklessness which is shown by the rejecter of miracles, if consistently carried out, would compel him to write *lie* or *delusion* on every page of history.

The secularist may sneer at miracles—it is easier to do so than to refute them. When Mr. Shackleton is prepared to *reason* against them, I shall be ready to hear his arguments and to answer them. Meanwhile, it is historically established that miracles have been wrought, and they constitute an insuperable difficulty to the secularists, who, though unable to disprove their reality, repudiate the only agent who is competent to produce them.

3. How does Mr. Shackleton propose to account for the marks of design that pervade the universe? Will he demur to my employment of the phrase, "marks of design," on the ground that it involves an assumption of the point to be established, viz., that there must be a designer. Very well, I will honour his objection by declining the obnoxious phrase, and in its stead will speak of "signs of adaptation." To this he can take no exception. The

case then stands thus when divested of its metaphysics. Here is a telescope. Now, observe

1. It accomplishes a certain purpose or object.

2. It has a certain internal structure.

3. By virtue of this internal structure it accomplishes the above object.

4. It was the intention of the maker, by such an internal structure, to accomplish that object.

I presume that secularists and Christians alike will accept these statements.

Again, Here is an *eye*, and with respect to it observe:—

1. It accomplishes a certain object and that an analogous one to the object accomplished by the *telescope*.

2. It has a certain internal structure equally analogous to the structure of the *telescope*.

3. By virtue of this internal structure it accomplishes the object.

So far the two cases are exactly similar. Now, we ask, who is the philosopher, and who is the fool of two men, one of whom concludes that as the three points of analogy are the same, the inference should be the same in both cases, and the other that the inference ought to be different? Both admit the adaptations in the telescope, and they admit an adapter too. Both admit the adaptations in the eye, but the secularist denies the adapter. The Christian has all reason and all analogy in favour of his conclusion; what has the secularist in favour of his? Nothing—he is profound enough to believe in adaptations *that* have no cause. And why does he shrink

from the conclusion to which a just logic inevitably conducts him? Is it because it is easier and more natural to believe in uncaused than caused adaptations? No, even the infidel himself feels that it would be more rational to allow an *intelligent* cause of effects, that reveal signs of intelligence, than to deny to them any adequate authorship—he feels that it would be more rational to admit that this world, this universe of worlds, *which could not have been better constructed if it had had an infinitely wise creator, must have had such a creator, than to grant that it has all the visible indications of wisdom, and yet affirm that these indications are all delusive.* Why then does he not openly avow his belief in a God? Because he cannot allow that God created the world without allowing that He created him—and he cannot allow that He created him without allowing that He governs him—and he cannot allow that He governs him, without allowing that, as a moral creature, he is amenable to Him—and he cannot allow that he is amenable to Him without allowing that he will be judged by Him, and he cannot think with complacency of judgment, because he feels in his conscience that he is not morally fit to encounter it; and therefore, rather than reflect on his condition as a sinner and submit to the terms of the gospel, he will deny the being of a God altogether, even at the risk of being compelled to believe in a world *wisely* constructed without any *wisdom*. Atheism would perish in an hour, if only its adherents could be persuaded that God will save them all, whatever may be their moral character here. They would at once unani-

mously exclaim, "Come now, seeing that there is nothing in God to inspire us with fear because of our sins, let us now openly acknowledge what we have always secretly felt, that there is a God who made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that therein is."

But I have no such God to announce for your acceptance. He is a being of infinite holiness, who will not suffer his laws to be broken with impunity. It is equally true that He is distinguished by infinite mercy, which he has made available to you all, through faith in his Son. Many an infidel has found joy and peace in believing; and the same blessings are offered to you. If you perish, it will be in spite of the glorious provisions of the way of salvation.

You may still continue to reject God; but let me affectionately warn you that it will be at your peril. You may still persist in saying that the world is the offspring of chance. Be it so; but do not forget that this Chance, according to your own language, performs wonderful things. If Chance has reared this majestic universe—if it has made those countless orbs that sparkle in the midnight heavens—if it has weighed them in its scales, so as to keep a just balance in the great system—if it has appointed them their tracks of motion, and so nicely adjusted their respective velocities and distances that they are never in danger of concussion and ruin—if it has inclined the axis of the earth so as to favour us with the regular succession of seasons—if it has covered its surface with verdure—if it has given the sea its tidal flow—if it has made man with his wondrous frame—if all that it has accomplished is found to be

so perfect, even when subjected to microscopic examination, that human wisdom can conceive no possible improvement—if Chance has done all this and infinitely more, then he is a bold man who dares to limit the omnipotence of Chance: and the Chance which has brought you into *this world*, and endowed you with an intellectual and moral nature, may, after death, take you into another, and erect a judgment-seat, and summon you to the bar, and try you with unimpeachable justice and wisdom. What will you say, then? Perhaps you will still call that a procedure of Chance. Be it so; the effect on you and your eternal experience, will be all the same as if it were the procedure of an intelligent God.

Partridge and Oakey, Printers, Paddington.